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DOM BEDE WINSLOW

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During the course of 1969, there will be published a memorial volume² in commemoration of Dom Bede Winslow's life and work, to be edited by Professor A. H. Armstrong and Miss E. J. B. Try, of which the general theme will be the progress in understanding of the Christian East which has taken place in the West during the period of Dom Bede

¹ Dom Lambert Beauduin died last 4th January 1969, a few months after Dom Bede Winslow. *R.E.* A short article appears in this number.

² This volume, to be published by Messrs Darton, Longman and Todd, will constitute the 1969 series of *E.C.Q.*, and will be uniform with the review. It will be sent without further charge to all those who have paid their 1969 subscriptions to *E.C.Q.*, and will also be available in a bound edition at a somewhat higher price.

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VOL. XIII AUTUMN AND WINTER 1959 NOS 3 AND 4

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Winslow's lifetime. The volume will include a fuller appreciation of Dom Bede's life and work, and a list of contributors to it will be published in the next number of *E.C.Q.*

Like most pioneers, and like nearly all the saints who have left their mark upon the history of the Church, Dom Bede suffered at times from misunderstanding, but he knew how to bide his time in patience, and found great encouragement in the sympathy which his work encountered in many quarters and in his extensive correspondence with many different sorts of people in all parts of the world. The letter which H.E. Cardinal Tisserant addressed to him in 1956 on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the *E.C.Q.* caused him particular joy and satisfaction. He lived, moreover, to see the work for Christian unity to which he gave his life become, with the election to the See of Peter of His Holiness Pope John XXIII, a great and universally recognised theme of the Church's life and prayer, as he had always believed that it should be.

In later years, it became Dom Bede's intention that it should be the followers of his close friend and collaborator Dom Constantine Bosschaerts, whose 'Vita et Pax' Foundation had been established in England since 1936 and who was himself for many years a friend of the then Mgr Roncalli, who should carry on his work for unity. Many will not need to be told how for Dom Bede the *E.C.Q.* was far more than just a review—it stood for a spiritual movement, which sought to awaken the hearts of English-speaking Catholics to the problems, and above all to the exigencies, both for the Church as a whole and for each individual in his particular vocation, which the Holy Spirit was making ever more urgently felt in different parts of the world in regard to the scandal of a divided Christendom. This movement must go on, now more than ever when the voice of the Church's highest authority is calling us to prepare the way for unity. So we ask all those in different parts of the world who read and appreciate the *E.C.Q.* to write to us with their suggestions, criticisms, news and comments; without this co-operation, the review cannot adequately fulfil its task.

IMPORTANT NOTE ON THE FINANCIAL SITUATION.—Readers were reminded some years ago that the *E.C.Q.* can only cover

its cost when the number of subscribers reaches a thousand. We are still far short of this, and the review has thus been incurring a very substantial deficit every year, and has only been able to continue in existence thanks to the generosity of a small group of friends and supporters, whose identity was in fact known only to Dom Bede Winslow himself.

The hard facts are that if the *E.C.Q.* and its work are to continue, at a time when the need for information and study material of every kind in connection with the problems of Christian unity is more than ever before accepted and recognised in the Church, a concerted and *personal* effort will be needed on the part of all those who believe that the *E.C.Q.* should go on. The object of this effort must be :

- (a) to provide enough money in donations to resolve the present anxieties and to place the review on a sound financial basis, and
- (b) to increase the number of subscribers to a point where no further appeals will be necessary, and the size of the review can be increased and its usefulness further extended.

We are confident that these difficulties can be overcome, and that each will consider carefully what he can do.

THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE 'EASTERN CHURCHES QUARTERLY'

THE following points are a revised version of a text composed by Dom Bede Winslow himself, and were explicitly approved by him in the present form before he died. It is thought that they may be of interest to subscribers to the Review, as a general indication of editorial policy, as it has been in the past and will continue to be in the future.

1. The fact of the existence of the Catholic Eastern Churches is a deeply significant manifestation of the true Catholicity of the Universal Church. This truth should constantly inform the thinking and action of Catholics in all fields—liturgy, discipline, theology, etc.

2. The Orthodox Churches, despite the schism, have preserved and in various ways contributed to the enrichment of the Holy Tradition of the Eastern Church. The full manifestation of the Church's visible unity can only come about

through the integration of the whole of this Tradition with that of the Western Church.

3. Catholics of the Eastern rites should be given every assistance and encouragement to be worthy and authentic representatives of this tradition, and to be inspired by it in their attitude both to theology and to Canon Law.

4. The jurisdiction and privileges of the Catholic Patriarchates of the Eastern rites should be maintained and defended in the light of the foregoing principles. This is an absolute prerequisite of any lasting union with the separated Eastern Churches.

5. The possibilities of the use of the various Eastern rites in the vernacular should be seriously studied in connection with the Church's missionary effort in Africa, India and the Far East.

6. In the Catholic approach to ecumenical questions full account should be taken of the Orthodox viewpoint, and every opportunity should be taken of co-operation between Catholic and Orthodox theologians.

7. No true ecumenical theology can be built up in the isolation of one particular tradition, Eastern or Western, or in abstraction from the great currents of modern philosophy and theology.

8. The primary problem for the Catholic in the field of Reunion is that posed by the existence of the Orthodox Churches. Progress is also possible between Catholics and Protestants, but this can only be permanent when in harmony with Eastern Tradition.

THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY¹

THERE are few of us to whom childishness, in one form or another, does not come more easily than we should like to admit, in our thinking about the content of our faith as Christians. Only too often we allow our attention to become so absorbed by some detail of a particular question, that we overlook the main point of it altogether. In regard to the doctrine of Purgatory, for example, which in the past has been the starting-point for so much—and so often futile—controversy, it will perhaps not be a waste of time to stop and ask ourselves what in fact is the central content of Revelation in this matter, and to seek to distinguish this central content from the various merely probable, and even improbable conceptions which a combination of religious folklore and devout imagination have embroidered around it.

This distinguishing of the essential from the merely secondary elements is not an easy matter. In the first place, there are in the Catholic Church all too few lay people—and even priests—who are really conscious of the difference which exists between *dogma*, and mere theological interpretation. For many, everything that a Catholic believes, and everything that he thinks along with this belief, stands on the same level of absoluteness. They forget that it is only the faith itself that is directly revealed to us by God: the eternal, divine truth, which, though it can be authoritatively expounded by Popes and Councils, cannot be altered by them. Theology on the other hand is human interpretation, which, while it draws such certainty as it possesses from the fundamental dogma, is never itself wholly free from a certain human relativity. Then, in the second place, we must always make a clear distinction between dogma itself and the imaginative concepts in which it may be clothed, which latter must always remain provisional. This is especially true in connection with the hereafter.

We must also remember that our conceptions about the life after death are determined to a great extent by our cultural background, and thus always contain an element of what one may call religious folklore. In the Middle Ages it was a

¹ EDITORIAL NOTE: This article has been translated from the November 1959 issue of the Belgian review *Streven*, by kind permission of the Editor, which we here gratefully acknowledge.

relatively common thing to see people being racked, drawn and quartered, broken on the wheel, and so forth, and someone living at this time naturally enough transposed this somewhat barbarous conception of the meaning of punishment into his thinking about the penance due for sin. Thus the fact that to-day we may feel on the contrary dissatisfied with such a way of imagining Purgatory, is in part simply a consequence of the change which has taken place in the interval in our penal laws. Obsolete symbols of this kind, meaningful in an earlier age, for us hide the truth much more than they reveal it.

The same sort of critical sense is necessary in regard to the visions which are related by some of the saints. The reality of their experience—of the deep union of their hearts with God in grace, and the deadly seriousness of sin—is wholly authentic, but in the images which they use to describe this experience they are just as dependent on their cultural surroundings and the conceptions of their time as we ourselves are. Their descriptions can teach us virtually nothing about the nature of Purgatory. The same might be said about our habit of imagining the universe spatially. Dante saw Hell in the depths of the earth, Purgatory on a mountain above, leading towards Heaven; but in our modern conception of the world, there is no longer any room for 'above' and 'below'. In other words, science is obliging us to think out our faith again, in a more genuinely religious manner. This is in fact precisely what contemporary Catholic philosophy and theology are trying to do. Both, for example, are tending to reject as too materialistic the conception of a separation of body and soul at death. If at the moment of death our spiritual soul does in fact become separated from the body, to exist for a time in some kind of precarious equilibrium as a pure spirit, the resurrection of the body would seem rather to be a degradation in relation to this supposed purely spiritual existence. The real meaning of our death is surely to be thought of rather as a fundamental alteration in the *manner* of our existence in matter, than as a sort of provisional interruption of it. If this is so, the resurrection of the body takes on immediately a far more profound meaning, and we are also enabled, in this perspective, to feel the souls of the departed much closer to us.

At all events, we must certainly never let our faith in regard to Purgatory be influenced or troubled by what

H. J. Baden has called our 'eschatological indiscretion':² in other words, our tendency to an unhealthy curiosity about occult and fantastic horror-stories concerning the hereafter, of which the existence of more than one 'museum of Purgatory' is a typical manifestation. Our Lord's own attitude, and the teaching of Scripture, point in a very different direction. When Peter, out of curiosity, asks the risen Lord what is going to happen to John, he gets an answer promptly enough: 'What concern is it of yours? Follow me' (John xxi, 22). 'Only the Lamb shall break open the seventh seal of the Book of Life, and . . . there was silence in heaven' (Apoc. viii, 1).

* * *

What are we taught by God Himself about Purgatory? For it is in Scripture that He speaks to us, in the language of His own people. To begin with, we must remember that the ideas of the ancient Hebrews about the life after death did not differ very greatly from those of the heathen peoples around them. They thought of the dead as condemned to undergo, as shadows in a dark abode in the bowels of the earth, a kind of diminished existence in which there was little possibility of either eternal reward or eternal punishment. Only in the last centuries before the coming of Christ did the Jews—and then not all of them, cf. Matt. xxii, 23-32—begin to have an idea of a higher life after death, *with God*. In the Old Testament there is only one text which witnesses to this belief; it is, however, a decisive one, and gives the substance of the later faith of the Church. In this text it is related (II Macc. xii, 41-46) how in about 165 B.C. there broke out in Palestine a war of national and religious liberation against King Antiochus Epiphanes. When, after a battle, the Jews went to bury their dead and found on many bodies heathen amulets and charms, the wearing of which was a grave sin against the Law, Judas commanded his soldiers first to pray for the dead: 'Therefore he commanded a sacrifice to be offered for the dead, that they should be forgiven their sins'. And the sacred writer concludes: 'This was a very good and noble act, for he was thinking of the resurrection'.

In the New Testament, Christ did not deem it necessary to repeat what the believing Jews already knew—that it is good

² Hans Jürgen Baden, *Neugier und Glaube*, Gütersloh, 1959, pp. 152-62.

to pray for the dead. In fact, whenever He speaks about the life to come, His attention is always fixed on the Last Judgement, the great Day of Jahweh, when the Son of Man, seated on the clouds of heaven, will judge the whole human race, and hand over the world to His Father. In our own faith, therefore, it is this which is the most important element: the coming restoration of the Kingdom of God, and the judgement which is to be passed on the whole of human history by Christ, our Judge and Redeemer.

The texts which are normally given in the theology manuals (Matt. v, 21-22; xii, 32 and xviii, 34 with Luke xii, 59) can strictly speaking not be taken as referring to Purgatory, at least in so far as we read them as they were spoken by Christ, in the language of His time. On the other hand, the warning, repeated in Matt. and Luke, that we shall not appear before God before we have 'paid the uttermost farthing', is unquestionably an important aspect of Christ's preaching. The Father is the All-Holy one: no sinfulness, however small, can appear before the presence of His face. In this sense one can say that the doctrine of Purgatory is *prepared* in Scripture.

In St Paul, however, there is a text from which the Christian West has thought itself obliged to deduce the existence of a 'fire': 'It is the day of the Lord that will disclose it (i.e. the Last Judgement), since that day is to reveal itself in fire, and fire will test the quality of each man's workmanship . . . if it is burnt up, he will be the loser; and yet he himself will be saved, though *only as men are saved by passing through fire*' (I Cor. iii, 10-15). This text, however, does not refer to the actions or the life of the faithful, but to the apostolic preaching of Paul and his followers. Moreover, we have here two images which are used in combination: God's majesty and holiness, which are revealed in fire, as on Sinai—it is the classical image for every theophany, especially that of the Last Judgement—and the idea of the fire in which gold is tested and purified: if our preaching is not of gold, but of straw, it will be burnt away. None the less, the basic thought remains, that God's holiness and majesty scorches up every impurity. And this absolute conviction of the total impossibility of appearing in God's presence with the least shadow of sinfulness, is a fundamental dogma of the Christian faith: shocking or unacceptable as it may seem to our modern, neo-heathen

relativism. And it is this conviction which has been the basis upon which, in subsequent ages, the Church has been led by the Holy Spirit to a clearer awareness of the doctrine of Purgatory.

In her official declarations on this subject, the Church has been extremely sober. The one point which she has been certain of from the very beginning, the one basic truth to which she has always returned in the course of her further reflection upon this article of her faith, is that it is her duty to pray for the departed. This is all the more striking in view of the fact that, during the first five centuries of her history, the Church's attention, like that of the New Testament writers themselves, was more especially centred on the Last Judgement. It was generally held that in the meantime the departed, both good and bad without distinction, remained in a kind of provisional state, to await the Second Coming of Christ. The Christians among them, according to the belief of the Church at this time—as we can see from many inscriptions in the Catacombs—were at rest during this intervening period 'in somno pacis'—in the sleep of peace.

One of the primacy sources of our faith is the liturgy; and we can find, already in the Catacombs, moving inscriptions which witness to the Church's prayer for her departed ones. Very early on, Mass was being offered for their intentions; in about 170 already there is mention of Mass being celebrated on the third day after death, and from the fourth century onwards Masses were being celebrated on the 7th and the 30th, and also on the 9th and the 40th days—in continuation, in fact, of pre-Christian practices. Round the seventh century, we find the first brotherhoods which undertake the obligation of having Masses offered for the dead, but it was some time longer, however, before the commemoration of the dead was taken up into the Canon of the Mass, at all events before this was done throughout the whole Church. Both in Rome, and among the Irish monks, there is evidence of this having taken place from about the end of the seventh century, but still on weekday Masses only. In the East especially, it is emphasized that this *Memento* must be made *after* the consecration—as is now the case with us—that is to say, during the preparation for Communion:

'Remember also, O Lord, thy servants—(here in former days the names of the departed were read aloud by the priest

or the deacon)—who have gone before us with the sign of faith—(Baptism)—and who rest in the sleep of peace. We pray thee, O Lord, to give to these souls (i.e. the baptized) and to all who have departed in Christ (wherever and however it may be) a place of refreshment, light and peace. Through the same Christ our Lord.³

In what we have said above, there is something which may well provoke a query in a critical mind. Has the Church not taken over too easily certain pre-Christian practices, and allowed them to creep in along with the converts from Hellenism, Roman heathendom, and later the Germanic religions? Without any question, these religions all gave great attention to the departed, an attention which was expressed in numerous ceremonies such as burial-feasts, anniversaries and so on. It is also undeniably true, that the converted heathens did in fact bring with them various practices which the Church has had to purify or slowly get rid of. Concern for the remembrance of the dead, even to-day, is particularly strong among peoples who have remained close to the soil and for whom the experience of oneness with nature, people and ancestors is thus more spontaneous. The question is, is this sentiment to be condemned? It is true that it can, even among Christians, lead sometimes to superstitious, magical or purely foolish practices. But if we consider this universal human feeling without prejudice, we shall be forced to admit that it is in reality the expression of a deeply authentic conviction that as human beings we remain bound up with each other, even across the barrier of death itself. Christianity has not destroyed this conviction, but merely sought to purify it from every stain of superstition and of spirit-worship—indeed it has gone a step further, and established it more firmly than ever before in the light of its faith in Him who in His Death has overcome death: Christ our Lord. This age-old human instinct has become positively directed, through the faith in Christ's Resurrection, towards the true basis of our mutual human interdependence. The departed belong from now on to Christ: they are 'departed

³ For further information, see J. A. Jungmann, *Missarum Solemnia*, Freiburg, 1948, I, pp. 275-7 and II, pp. 288-300. English translation: *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, New York, I (1951), pp. 217-19 and II (1955), pp. 237-48.

in Christ', just as they were baptized in Him and thus taken up into His Church. Hence our duty, as members of the same community, to pray that they may be fully united with Christ. Thus the Church has done nothing else than to elevate and to deepen this fundamental conviction of human solidarity in the light of the only indication she was given: her faith in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

* * *

With all this, we have still really said nothing about the existence and the nature of Purgatory. It is here above all that we must clearly draw the line of distinction between the certainty of faith on the one hand, and on the other, greater or lesser theological likelihood or unlikelihood. It is not here the place to discuss in detail the many different theological interpretations of Purgatory which have at various times been made. Our main attention will be given to the decisive, or respectively only admonitory, utterances of the Church's Magisterium.

In regard to these theological interpretations, it may suffice to point out that the conception of Purgatory that is fairly generally found to-day in the manuals of theology, in religious instruction and in preaching, reached its present form only in the seventeenth century, in the writings of Bellarmine and Suárez. Strongly 'western' in its orientation, this theology conceives of Purgatory as a place, where those souls who have not died in a state of mortal sin do penance for the temporal punishments due for their as yet unexpiated guilt. This punishment, which is thought of as a *satisfaction*, consists in suffering by 'fire'. Purgatory thus differs from Hell by its provisional nature, and above all by the fact that the soul which is there knows that it is not damned, but that it is already accepted and chosen by God. This teaching, based on certain medieval interpretations, has become generally accepted despite the fact that St Thomas, who placed the emphasis on purification by *love*, was already in his time rather a continuator of the Greek tradition, which knows nothing of a 'fire' or a 'place', makes no distinction between sin and punishment, and is against the idea of a satisfaction thought of all too juridically as a kind of paying off of a debt due to God. The East has

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always thought more in terms of a continuous *purification*, effected in us by God's indwelling power, and seen as a further degree of the process of 'divinisation' or man's transformation by grace, according to the Greek perspective.

The Magisterium of the Roman Church, in the two great Councils of reunion which have been held since the schism of 1054, has never had any idea of condemning these positions of the Eastern Church. Neither the Second Council of Lyon (1274), nor the still more important Council of Florence (1439) has taken up the idea of 'fire' in its solemn and infallible definitions. In the Council of Florence, it is true, the Latins proposed to add to the definitive Decree, taken over from Lyon, proofs from Scripture and the theology of God's righteousness which implied the ideas of satisfaction, punishment and fire; but eventually, on the insistence of the Greeks, nothing more than 'purification' ('post mortem purgari') was defined.⁴ Both these two Councils, and also Pope Benedict XII (1336) in his important 'Constitution' on the subject of the Last Things, lay the emphasis, on the contrary, on the one point which is unquestionably certain: that our prayers for the dead do have a meaning.

The Church has also been obliged to take up a position in regard to the teachings of Luther and of the Reformation generally, which reject Purgatory in the sense of a transitional state between this life and heaven, and with it every form of prayer, penance or Indulgence in favour of the departed, on the grounds that Christ alone is our Redeemer. In the face of this, the Council of Trent did nothing more than re-affirm the teaching of the earlier Councils, even though one can find allusions, in the motivation which is given for the Decrees, to the 'western' conceptions. This is hardly surprising in view of the fact that the East was practically speaking unrepresented at this Council. At the same time, the Council condemned unhealthy speculations about Purgatory, and also the various deplorable practices which had sprung up, especially in connection with Indulgences, and which had formed the tragic occasion for Luther's revolt.

Apart from these three Ecumenical Councils, and the 'Constitution' of Benedict XII, the Church has made no other solemn definitions of faith about this dogma. All that we have

⁴ J. Gill, *The Council of Florence*, Cambridge, 1959, pp. 120-21 and 270ff.

are occasional warnings by different Popes against various excesses. Leo X recalls that the souls in Purgatory are certain of their salvation, even though the possibility of personal merit has ended with their death. Alexander XII condemns those who maintain that Purgatory will certainly not last longer than twenty years, and at the same time every kind of speculation about the length of the time of purification. And let it be remarked in passing that the period of time which is mentioned in connection with certain Indulgences refers not to time spent in Purgatory, but to the length of time during which, according to the earlier penitential practice of the Church, it would have been necessary to do penance before one could have received forgiveness of one's sins.⁵

This is therefore the content of our faith. We believe firmly that we should pray for the souls of the departed, that they may be purified from their sins, and that there is therefore such a thing as a 'state' of purification after death. We can if we wish imagine this as a 'place', coupled with a certain duration, or think in terms of a 'fire', but we must never forget that in doing so we are using human conceptions which are in no sense an essential part of our faith, and which, therefore, we have no right to impose upon others, at least not as articles of faith.

* * *

When God reveals some truth to us, He never does so in order simply to satisfy our curiosity, but in order that we may live better: a dogma is always a *saving*, redemptive truth. This applies also to the doctrine of Purgatory.

In the first place, this doctrine gives us a deeper insight into the meaning of *our solidarity in Christ*. To pray for the departed is nothing more or less than a logical putting into practice of our faith in the Mystical Body of Christ. For the departed as for us, Christ is undeniably the unique Mediator. In this the Protestants are wholly right. But in their rejection of Purgatory, they forget two things. We are redeemed by Christ alone, but, in the first place, not without ourselves, and, secondly, not each for himself alone. The Redemption is a

⁵ On this subject, P. Anciaux, *Le Sacrement de la Pénitence*, Louvain, 1957, may usefully be consulted.

divine initiative that attains us, not in our individual solitude, but in the Church. In the Redemption we are taken up into solidarity with Christ, of course ; but in Him, also into solidarity with *all* those who are in Him. It is Christ's intention that His Mystical Body works together with and in Him for the Redemption of all. He is the Intercessor, but we must pray too, with, through and in Him. He is the Offerer and the Offering, but we must offer too, with Him and in Him. Christ's Cross is the unique and only satisfaction for our sins, but we all need to do penance, for ourselves and for others. And when at death the time comes that we can no longer actively do penance, offer sacrifice and pray, we shall still depend passively, as it were, on Christ's intercession and on that of His Mystical Body which is in Him—the intercession of Mary, of the Saints, and of the whole Church militant.

In saying this, we have not explained precisely *how* this 'passive' purification after death takes place. Our Lord Himself said very little about Purgatory, and if He had said more, we should not have understood Him. For it signifies the beginning of a life which we simply cannot imagine, a life from which no one has ever come back. Philosophers may suggest that as we die we are given the possibility of some supreme form of activity, in which the whole of our life is finally summed up ; but this is something which in any case we could not attempt to imagine or describe here on earth. If it is indeed probable that after our death we do conserve in some way or other our natural relationship to the body, it must in any case be in a wholly different manner to that which we experience in this life : we cannot *imagine* what our relationship will then be like to time and space and to other people, for all our experience belongs to this side of the barrier. And yet : it is *I*, the self that I now know, who will step over the threshold : my spiritual nature as a person will remain always the same. And we can say more than this : grace is given us here on earth as a seed which will grow up into eternal life ; and it will therefore perhaps be possible to find in the sphere of this life of grace certain indications about the after-life. We shall here take three points of comparison : the nature of the life of grace itself ; the high spiritual experience of some of the mystics ; and our more ordinary Christian experience in the act of dying.

By grace, we begin already here on earth to be purified from sin. Sin is in reality simply every form of selfishness : in whatever form it is put into practice in our daily lives, whether it be greed, impatience, sloth, lust or anger, the heart of sin is self-love. Grace on the other hand is nothing other than love for God and man, love of which we are not of ourselves capable, but which is freely given to us in God's own love with which He has first loved us, and which heals us of our own self-love. This has some important consequences for our thinking about Purgatory. Experience teaches us that even when we are fully embarked on the life of grace, our self-love continues to offer resistance. To live totally in grace would be to live totally in love—holiness, in other words. And it is in the doctrine of Purgatory that the Church brings more clearly home to us this awareness of our constant unwillingness to give God's grace its free course in our lives. Purgatory exists precisely because most of us *do* have 'sanctifying grace'—we *are*, fundamentally, in a state of seeking to love God and to maintain our relationship with Him—and yet we are held back by a thousand bonds of sloth, half-heartedness and self-love ; and we know in our hearts that we shall never be able to appear before God until we have accepted Him totally and wholeheartedly in love. And it is this purification, achieved here on earth only in the saints, that takes place in Purgatory. Grace is always at once peace and unrest, night and day, joy and pain. Joy, because it is only in grace that we are able to be fully and wholly ourselves ; pain, because we first have to be set free from ourselves—from our self-love, our certainties, and the narrow puppet-world which we have built up around ourselves. God is a jealous God : He seeks to possess everything in His love.

If we are not always conscious of this, it is because we allow the life of grace in us to become so tame and sluggish, buried under the rush of outward busy-ness ; we listen so little to what our own heart is saying to us. Only the saints know the pain, and also the great joy which grace can bring. Some of the mystics tell of the dark night of the senses and of the soul, when everything is obscure, the heart dull, the feelings dry and the spirit lonely. But these moments of heavy trial are also a time of great purification. It is just during these moments, when God seems to be so infinitely far away, that

He is in reality closer than ever at hand. It is here that the soul learns to surrender itself totally to the triumphant pressure of God's love. It was the experience of the little St Theresa to feel as if she were a broken toy, thrown in the corner by Jesus; and her highest consolation was to feel truly that she was nothing, abandoned in the presence of her Lord. It is in this experience of the mystics—as it has been described by a Catherine of Genoa, for example—that we can find the best image that it is possible to have of what Purgatory really is: to be scorched by God's love, until the last remnants of our self-love have been burnt away.

Most people never get as far as this while they are still in this life—which is precisely why they will have to go through it *after* this life. For we all have to pass this way, either during this life, in love and willingly, or else later—but then without the possibility of at the same time growing before God in love and merit; in the latter case it is thus a *passive* purification only. There *is*, however, one moment of this life which *can* be, for many people and with the help of the Sacraments, something of this kind: the moment of our death itself. It is in this experience of dying, that the Christian feels at last the real seriousness of this life. Everything that up to this moment has held his heart captive and divided is now taken away from him: honour, money, friends, and the whole 'dazzle of vanities'. He is able at last to be free of everything, in order to lose himself in God's love. To be in the presence of a person who has achieved this awareness of profound peace and surrender to God can be a deeply moving experience for someone who is at the death-bed of a believing Christian. In this sense it is possible to speak of the 'Sacrament' of our death—by the deprivation of everything visible which has kept us away from God, we are led to the point of a total interior renunciation in abandonment and contrite love.

Such a purifying death, however, is not yet Purgatory. It is still an *active* process of purification, a time in which our life can reach its last and highest stage of growth and maturity in Christ. Purgatory, on the other hand, begins only when we have crossed the threshold. We may certainly, if we wish, take account of the suggestion which has been made by some, that the place and the duration of Purgatory are nothing other than the moment of our death itself, in which (as Newman

has portrayed it in the 'Dream of Gerontius') man, freed at last from the physical nature in which he has been shut up while on earth, appears without intermediary before God's Majesty. Yet it is to be feared that such an idea would again easily cause many people to think wrongly about the temporality, the duration of this moment. We need always to make a sharp distinction between the moment of our *dying*, in which we are still on this earth and can grow in grace and in love, and the moment of *death*, in which we are separated from earthly time and space, and have set ourselves firmly and irrevocably in our final choice before God, which we have been as it were preparing throughout the whole course of our life. In Purgatory, as the Church understands and preaches it, there is no longer any *growth* in grace possible, only the *purification* of that which we have become through the co-operation of our freedom with the working of grace in us.

On this earth we live as it were in a dream, distracted and beguiled by the many-coloured play of our senses, divided within ourselves and by our extension in time. Purgatory constitutes for us the beginning of the most intense, total and final living of our spiritual selfhood, the first moment of the shadowless brilliance of the spirit. It would therefore not be exact, we would suggest, to think of Purgatory merely as the self-accusation of a contrite heart. For in it we are appearing before the absolute Glory of God's Majesty, not yet in the beatific vision of the saints, but still knowing ourselves to be in His immediate Presence, shining through us and bearing us up. If we are a punishment for ourselves, it is because we see, in the light of God's own love for us, which we have answered so hesitantly but which is now triumphantly taking possession of our hearts, how deeply we have offended His holiness, and we feel the unspeakable weight of His pure and all-holy anger. But it is not only God's anger that weighs upon us. It is His Love which causes our greatest pain, a pain which is far greater than any we on earth can bear. It scorches up in us all the remnants of our self-love, ingratitude and refusal. But at the same time it penetrates us totally—which is why Purgatory is also a joy far more intense than anything we can experience here on earth.

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We must conclude. If the life of grace here on earth is the fruit of the Inhabitation in us of Father, Son and Spirit, so that in the depths of ourselves the living Power of the Triune God, who *is* Love, secretly wakes us to the divine Life—if this is really so here on earth, then when at last the veil of our bodily existence is torn apart, it is these Divine Persons who will come and take full possession of our hearts. Grace is to love God from out of *His* Love, with which He has first loved us. After death, this Love of God will take possession of us totally. But if, at that moment, we are found still turned in upon ourselves in the continuation of a life which even up to the threshold of death itself has kept us bound in sloth and lovelessness to the stiffness of our self-love, then there can be no alternative but for that divine Fire of Love to burn away our frozen rigidity in joyful agony. And it is just then that the prayers of the Church, the intercession of Mary and of the Saints, and the petitions of our loved ones can support and help us as we stand before God's altar. But above all, it will be the sight of our Risen Lord, His face glorified through His Passion, which will be our last and fullest refuge. It will be His own pierced hands which will be laid on our foreheads, and He will put away all pain and sin from our hearts and lead us in, by way of His own Glory, before the Face of the Father, by the Power of the Spirit.

SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN

'CHAPITRES THEOLOGIQUES, GHOSTIQUES ET PRATIQUES'

THE publication in the edition 'Sources chrétiennes' of 225 chapters of Symeon the New Theologian, in their Greek text and French translation under the title 'Chapitres théologiques, gnostiques et pratiques', is a very welcome and long-desired piece of work, the advantages of which cannot be enough appreciated. It excites in us all the more the desire to see edited the other works of the New Theologian, which are so difficult to find.

Symeon the New Theologian is one of the greatest mystics of all time. It is impossible for anyone who appreciates spiritual and divine things not to be struck by the sincerity, genuineness and simplicity of an experience which possesses so much 'convincingness' in it; by the wonderful alliance of the deepest awe and terror towards the divine, with the simplest love and most filial confidence; by the symphonic fusion of the most divine feelings; by their magnetic and most purely christian beauty; and by a 'pneumatological' insight and a psychological clairvoyance and awareness of a powerful calibre, all this expressed in the most concrete and crystalline style, with great precision, vividness, colour and harmony.

Symeon the New Theologian lived at a time when Byzantine spiritual experience was losing much of its vigour, and theological thought in its general current was getting more and more concerned with the words rather than with the thought expressed by these words. It is in this perspective that his work should be considered. He felt in himself the Promethean fire at which have been lit the experiences of a St Paul, a Chrysostom, a Gregory the Theologian, and others, and set them to action. In his immediate characteristic he thus appears to us as 'the vindicator of spiritual experience', not that his own experience was more profound than that of the above-named giants, for example, or even as profound and mighty as theirs, but because, in addition to the fiery and vehement expression of a mighty experience, deeply subjective in its character, he has given a 'theologization' of a Catholic truth, I mean the truth of the necessity of experiencing God in this life in order to attain salvation; a last trait which

imparts to him a unique and distinctive physiognomy among theologians. Our exposition will be limited to his thought as it appears in the above-named publication, in the famous polemic discourse entitled : 'On those who pretend to possess the Holy Ghost unconsciously in themselves', and in the celebrated ascetical treatise attributed to him by the Oriental tradition and entitled : 'Method of sacred prayer and concentration', and will deal with the more characteristic aspects only.

A text of Gregory the Theologian (a master who has had the greatest influence on Symeon—in fact I have been able to find a great number of literal quotations from Gregory, mechanically and spontaneously springing under Symeon's pen often at the most crucial points of his thought, a phenomenon astonishing in a man who relies so much upon experience, and which can be explained only by a real assimilation of Gregory's thought) seems to express fairly well the general trend and character of Symeon's thought. We shall therefore make fundamental use of it in our exposition. The text is : 'For we should not begin with contemplation to end with fear—an undisciplined contemplation (*θεωρία ἀχαλίνωτος*) would soon impel us into precipices—but, imbued with fear and purified by it, and so to say, reduced by it, we shall soar in the heights. For where fear is, there is observance of the commandments ; where there is observance of the commandments, there is a purification of the flesh (*σαρκὸς κάθαρσις*), of the cloud which intercepts the soul, and does not allow it to see clearly the divine ray. Where there is purification, there is illumination (*Ἐλαφυσίς*) : illumination is the gratification of desire, for those who desire the greater things, or the greatest things, or things above the great. Therefore one should first purify oneself, then converse with the pure' (Discourse on the Holy Lights of the Epiphany).

'An undisciplined contemplation would soon impel us into precipices'—it is not some philosopher jealous of the contemplative faculty who has uttered these words, as might be imagined if their author were not named : it is, on the contrary, a theologian addicted to the most soaring flights, a 'θεολογικώτατος νοῦς', and therefore his words on the dangers of a certain sort of contemplation arrest very much our attention. For both, Gregory as well as Symeon, man has

been created 'contemplator of the visible creation, mystic of the intelligible' (ἐπόπτην τῆς δρατῆς κτίσεως, μύστην τῆς νοομένης—words found in Gregory's second discourse on Easter, and in that on Christ's Nativity, and literally transcribed by Symeon, Chapter ii, 6, 23). In the first part of the panegyrical discourse on Athanasius, Gregory says: 'As the sun, which gives to those who see and to those who are seen, the power to the ones to see, to the others to be seen, is itself the most beautiful of visible things: so God, for those who think and those things that are thought, creating for the ones the power to think (τὸ νοεῖν) and for the others the power to be thought (τὸ νοεῖσθαι), is Himself the summit of intelligible things (τῶν νοομένων ἐστι τὸ ἀκρότατον) where every desire stops (εἰς ὃν πᾶσα ἔφεσις ἴσταται), and can go no further. Neither can or ever shall tend even the most philosophical and soaring mind, or the most inquisitive, to anything more sublime, for He is the end of all desires (ἔστι τὸ τῶν δρεκτῶν ἔσχατον), and the cessation of all contemplation attaining him (καὶ οὐ γενομένης πάσῃς θεωρίᾳς ἀνάπταντις).' These last words are also literally quoted by Symeon, always without explicit reference (Chapter ii, 17). From this passage it is evident that the contemplative faculty in man could never be enough appreciated, that it is the lever moved by God himself to attain him, without which no intellectual or spiritual life is ever conceivable; that its absolute haven is nothing less than God Himself. It is not then the contemplative faculty as such which is to be disparaged—far from it! but a disordered use of it, a certain ἀκαρία, inopportunity, in its use. 'The beautiful is no longer beautiful, when it is not done beautifully' (Method). All Symeon's famous treatise: 'Method of sacred prayer and concentration', is a practical illustration of this point: the last degree of spiritual life is 'the fixed gaze of contemplation' (ἡ τῆς θεωρίας ἀκλινῆς ἐντενίσις), the end of the scale, proper to the perfect, the issue of the preceding degrees. How ridiculous, how absurd, to try to reach the highest point of the scale (κλίμαξ) without beginning gradually with the very first, then the second, and so on. Symeon gives a picturesque description of those who try to addict themselves to a state of fixed contemplation without having first acquired the elementary requirements—the fear of God, etc. 'The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God.'

He says : 'The characteristics of the first prayer are these : when one, present at prayer, raising to heaven his hands, eyes and mind, the mind fashioning divine ideas and conceiving celestial beauties, orders of angels and dwellings of the just, and in one word, everything he has heard of from the Scriptures ; condensing these in his mind at the time of prayer, he excites his soul to divine desire, gazing clearly to heaven, and there comes a time when, dropping tears from his eyes, he is somehow slowly stupefied in his heart, feels an upheaval, what has taken place seems to him a divine consolation, and he prays that he may dwell for ever in such a practice. These are the symptoms of delusion : for the beautiful is no longer beautiful when it is not done beautifully. When therefore such a man isolates himself in an isolation without issue, it is impossible that he runs not out of his mind. If equally he does not sink into this disease, it is impossible for him to acquire the virtues or attain impassibility.' How subtle is all this and how true ! How easily could false contemplation be confused with the true ! The essential defect of this prayer lies in the antecedence of an act which should come consequently. We have already mentioned the word *ἀκαίρα*, inopportunity : this word is of the utmost importance. It gives the note to the whole treatise of Symeon, which starts with these words : 'There are three ways of prayer and concentration by which the soul is raised up or pulled down : it is raised up by using these in their proper time (*ἐν ίδιω καιρῷ ταῦτα χρωμένη*), it is pulled down by addicting itself to them inopportunely and unreasonably' (*ἀκαίρως καὶ ἀνοήτως*). This word should be explained.

Our Father Gregory the Theologian attacks those who say that the tree of knowledge which was planted in paradise was either bad or forbidden through envy. Far from it ! 'but it was good, partaken of opportunely (*εὐκαίρως μεταλαμβανόμενον*) : for the tree was contemplation, according to me, the access to which was safe only to those more perfect in state, not good to the simpler yet and more greedy in desire, in the same way as neither perfect food is advantageous to those who are still simple and in need of milk' (Second Discourse on Easter). It is not safe, because there is a great danger—pride. The first man thought that God was forbidding him the tree of knowledge through envy

(φθονερῶς), and he presumptuously tried to raise himself above the measure of the harmoniously and proportionately given divine contemplation. Our Father John Chrysostom comments from his side on the serpent's words : 'Hearing from it that God has forbidden for this reason the participation, because He knew that your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods knowing the good and bad, inflated by the hope of equalling the divinity (τῇ ἐλπίδι τῆς ισοθείας φυσηθείσα), she was now conceiving great things. Such are the machinations of the enemy : when by deception he raises to great heights, it is then that he pulls down to a deep precipice. For having conceived to equal the divinity, she rushed to the participation (16th Homily on Genesis).' In order therefore that 'by a too easy acquisition should not take place also a too easy flinging off of the thing acquired' (Gregory, 2nd Theological Discourse), God 'gave a law as matter to the free will' (Ὕλην τῷ αὐτεξουσίᾳ, 2nd Discourse on Easter). Chrysostom expresses the idea thus : 'For it is for this reason that the tree has been called "of the knowledge of good and evil", because the commandment exercising (γυμνάζουσα) the obedience and disobedience related to the tree' (7th Homily on Genesis, shorter series).

The logical order then, which could not be reversed without impunity, is to proceed from the point of departure, not from the point of destination, and the point of departure is the fear of God. The most characteristic manifestation of this most laudable fear is tears : 'Before the compunction (πένθους) and the tears (δακρύων), let nobody delude you by vain words neither let us deceive ourselves, there is no repentance in us neither true penitence, there is no fear of God in our hearts, we have not condemned ourselves, neither has our soul come to the sensation of the future judgement and the eternal punishments' (Symeon iii, 23). He calls the tears the 'second baptism' : 'The first baptism has the water to symbolize the tears, has the 'myron' of the unction to signify the intelligible 'myron' of the Spirit. The second is no longer the figure of the truth, but is truth itself' (i, 36). This is very simple, very clear, and, understood as it should be, eminently true. God knows what certain apparently too subtle commentators have deduced from it, how many so-called heresies they have found in it ! For them, Symeon denies the worth of ordinary baptism ; he also, as might be supposed, believes in the necessity of a

'sensitive sensation' of the operations of the Spirit for salvation and 'state of grace'. How unjust is all this on their part, and how unworthy of an answer, were it not for the great number of those contaminated by such a calumnious prejudice! First of all, Symeon never denies the value and the fundamental importance of sacramental baptism—on the contrary he praises it as do the most orthodox Fathers: 'At the divine baptism we receive the remission of our sins, we are delivered of the ancient malediction and are sanctified by the presence of the Holy Ghost' (iii, 45): no better praise of baptism could be given. But he is aware that after as before baptism our free will remains: we may possess the first baptism, and though possessing it, by our bad actions become the prey of the devil, and thus deprive ourselves of the baptism's fruits. But as long as, in addition to the first, we persevere in the second, we can never become the prey of the devil. Concerning the second inane accusation, we remark the following: Symeon, as a Byzantine, has the full right to think and express himself in a Byzantine way, that is very concretely and by images. It should also be acknowledged that this way of expression is even more characteristic of the Holy Scriptures than of Symeon himself; that consequently it is by no means inferior or bad, and that it can convey the highest mysteries. It is, moreover, much more illuminating, suggestive and interesting than the scholastic style. One of its methods is to express the invisible by the visible, the spiritual and intellectual by the sensitive. When therefore Symeon says 'the baptism of tears', he is stressing much more the spiritual fountain of these tears than the tears themselves. He leaves it an open question to the casuists to consider gravely whether a real '*μετάνοια*' can exist without sensitive tears or not. That the matter should be thus understood is proved by the fact that our great Father Gregory the Theologian was the first to create the expression 'baptism of tears' and the way he describes those who possess it shows well what he signifies by it, that what is essentially required is purely spiritual. However, to say 'baptism of repentance' for example, or simply 'repentance' instead of 'baptism of tears' would be much less rich and suggestive—apart from the fact that sincere tears are the most typical, the most human, 'expression' of repentance. Gregory's text is this: 'I know also a fifth baptism, that of tears, but

which is much more laborious—as he who bathes his bed every night, and his coverlet with tears, and to whom the wounds of vice have become infect; he who walks on in compunction and affliction, who imitates the conversion of Manasseh, and the pitiéd humility of the Ninevites; who pronounces the words of the publican in the temple, and is justified contrarily to the haughty Pharisee; who bows like the Chanunean, implores love, and crumbs of dogs, food of the too hungry' (Discourse on the Holy Lights of the Epiphany). With all this in mind, we are disposed to understand in what sense should be understood Symeon's famous doctrine on the 'sensation' of the Holy Ghost in us. First, it is to be remarked that 'you who have been baptized in Christ, you have put on Christ' (Galatians iii). Is Christ something or nothing? He is perhaps something, continues Symeon ironically; he is the God-man, become man in order to make of man a god. He vivifies us not by the corrupt, but by the divinized, flesh (*διά τῆς θεωθείστης ψωποτοῖς*). On those who pretend to possess the Holy Ghost unconsciously in themselves). Christ works in us by the Spirit, who 'leads the way (*προοδοποιοῦντος*) and prepares the dwelling' (*τὴν οἰκίαν προευτρεπίζοντος*, Chapter i, 6). According to our Father Gregory, the Spirit is 'life and life-giving, light and light-provider; goodness itself, and fountain of goodness; Spirit of rectitude, directing principle (*ἡγεμονικὸν*), master, sending, segregating, creating temples to himself, guiding' (*όδηγοῦν*), operating (*ἐνεργοῦν*) as he wishes, distributing gifts, Spirit of adoption, of truth, of wisdom, of understanding, of knowledge, of piety, of counsel, of fortitude, of fear . . .' (On the Holy Pentecost). Could really one who has a mind and a faculty of knowledge be totally unaware of the energies of the Spirit in him, of a person so formidable as the Spirit, if he is not severed from Him? Could he really not notice the changes occurring in him? How could he then be able to know the holy will of the Spirit? This is Symeon's point, and it should be acknowledged that it is not only a truth, but a 'truism', so to say, so obvious that it cannot admit any challenge at all. He is far from meaning a 'sensitive sensation' of the energy of the Spirit: he uses such words as convey the meaning of a spiritual knowledge (*άγνωστως*; *νοερῶς*; *γνωστῶς*; *τρανῶς κατανοεῖ*; *οὐ κατὰ τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς θεωρίαν, ἀλλὰ*

κατὰ τὴν τῆς θεότητος ἀποκάλυψιν 'not according to a vision of the flesh, but according to a revelation of the divinity'; αὐτὸ τὸ φῶς ἴδοι ψυχῆς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ ἀκριβῶς γνῶ τὰς αὐτοῦ ἐλλάμψεις' καὶ ἐνεργείας ἐν αὐτῷ 'he sees the light itself by the eyes of the soul, and knows accurately his illuminations and energies in him'; σὺν τῷ λόγῳ βλέπει 'sees with the intelligence'; ὁ πνευματικῶς ἀναβλέψας καὶ τοῖς νοεροῖς ὅρον ὀφθαλμοῖς 'he who looks spiritually and sees with intellectual eyes'; συνάψη γνωστῶς; ἴδειν καὶ μαθεῖν; θεωρίαν τῶν ὅντων ὅντων. Most of these quotations have been taken from his treatise on the subject). He sometimes uses certain words (*εὐαισθήτως αἰσθάνεται, αἰσθησιν*) that have a most lucidly spiritual meaning in the context and that could be misinterpreted only by superficial minds. That their meaning is essentially spiritual is evident to anyone who reads a sentence such as this: 'The Master who has favoured us with things superior to the senses has also by his Spirit given us another sense above the senses (*ὑπέρ αἰσθησιν αἰσθησιν ἀλλην*, Chapters ii, 3) and this: 'Everyone who is insensible to the one, is insensible to everything, as he who is sensible to the one (*ὁ αἰσθησιν ἔχων πρὸς τὸ ἐν*) is in the sensation of everything and outside the sensation of everything. He is in the sensation of everything and is not absorbed by their sensation' (ii, 4). He often couples the word 'αἰσθησις, sensation', with 'νοερά, intellectual', etc.' such for example as in this sentence (i, 53): 'He who has not put on the image of our Master Jesus Christ the supercelestial, man and God, in the rational and intelligent man, sensitively and consciously (*ἐν τῷ λογικῷ καὶ νοερῷ ἀνθρώπῳ εὐαισθήτως καὶ γνωστῶς ἐνδυσάμενος*) is still only flesh and blood, not capable of receiving by the reason the sensation of spiritual glory (*πνευματικῆς δόξης αἰσθησιν μὴ δυνάμενος διὰ τοῦ λόγον λαβεῖν*)'. It should be well borne in mind that this 'consciousness' of the Holy Ghost in us was never meant by Symeon to denote some infallible certainty of our being 'in a state of grace', neither does Symeon pretend by it that nothing of what the Spirit does in us is concealed to us—both of these interpretations of his thought are shallow and erroneous. For example, concerning this latter interpretation, he says: 'he aids visibly and invisibly (*ἀφανῶς*) at the same time, in an unknown and in a known manner' (*ἀγνῶστως καὶ γνωστῶς*

iii, 71). Also : 'He who breaks his own will through the fear of God, God gives him, in an unknown manner and such as he knows not (ἀγνώστως οὔτως ὡς οὐκ οἴδεν), his own will, and safeguards it unaltered in his heart' (76). What he meant was the most simple 'truism', and those who deny this 'truism', which is so stressed by Symeon, do so because they have already denied its foundation : that the divine vision is possible already in this world, nay, not only possible, but, as Symeon sarcastically puts it, whosoever does not see God in this life will not see Him in the life to come either.

But let us turn back a little and proceed by degrees. 'He who has the fear of God observes his commandments' (i, 5). Symeon insists on an accurate observation of all the commandments. His most pathetic accents seem to have been uttered on the love of the poor and the pardon of insults. This observation is not exterior, it is above all in the heart, the fountain of all thoughts. This is why, conditioning the observation of the commandments from the heart, there is the famous practice diversely named by ascetic authors, generally known as 'the guard of the heart (φυλακή καρδίας)', the 'quietude of the heart' (καρδιακή ήσυχία), 'concentration (προσοχή)', 'the guard of the mind (νοός τήρησις)' etc. This is a very profound operation, and it is not now our intention to analyse all the subtleties of its mechanism as revealed by the great ascetic authors ; its essence is purely spiritual. However, as this operation consists in the retirement of the mind as much as possible from the senses and in its return on itself, it is evident that a certain attitude of the body might contribute much to this aim. Symeon says : 'Then sitting in a quiet cell, and persevering in one corner, be attentive to do what I say : shut the door and raise your mind (Ἐπαρον τὸν νοῦν σοῦ) above everything vain, that is temporal ; then, applying your beard on your chest and directing your sensitive eye with all your mind to the centre of the belly, that is the navel, stifle the drawing of breath of the nose such that you breathe uneasily, and investigate intellectually inside in the entrails to find the position of the heart where are wont to dwell all the psychic faculties. And at first you shall find obscurity and a resistant thickness, but when you persevere and practise this operation night and day, you shall discover, O miracle ! unceasing joy, for as soon as the mind finds the position of

the heart, it beholds almost instantly things it never had known' (Method). Considered abstracted from its spiritual fountain, this practice might seem, as it did especially at the time of Palamas, a ridiculous, purely mechanical device, for some too intelligent minds ; but unsevered from its underlying spirit, it is the visible or one of the visible expressions of a great spiritual effort, which is thus described by Gregory the Theologian : 'For nothing seemed to me equal to shutting the senses, becoming outside the flesh and the world, rolled up upon myself, touching nothing of human things (Apologetic)' and by St Basil thus : 'For the mind which is not dispersed to the exterior, neither diffused by the senses into the world, returns to itself ; through itself it ascends to the thought of God' (First letter to the Theologian). If, as our Father Maxim says, 'the sensible initiates (ἀρχεῖ) every passionate motion of our physical powers' (On Theology, v, 3) then the abstraction of the soul, as much as possible, from the senses, purifies the roots of our actions, is in itself what is called 'purification' (κάθαρσις). Dionysius the Areopagite calls this process the 'circular motion of the soul' and defines it as being 'its entry into itself far from outer things, the simple rolling up (ἡ ἐνοειδῆς συνέλιξις) of the intellectual faculties, giving it, as in some circle, unerring fixedness, returning it and collecting it from the many exterior things, first into itself, then becoming, so to say, simple, united to the powers joined in oneness, and thus conducted to the beautiful and the good' (Divine Names, 4). The doctrine was first magnificently exposed by Plato who, for example, says in the Phaedo : 'It thinks then the most beautiful things, when nothing of these hinders it, neither audition nor vision, nor suffering nor any pleasure, and when it most becomes itself in itself (αὐτὴ καθ' αὐτὴν γίγνεται), leaving aside the body, and as much as possible not communicating with it neither touching it, desires being'. He also speaks of 'using the intellect itself, pure and in itself (αὐτὴ καθ' αὐτὴν εἰλικρινεῖ τῇ διανοίᾳ χρώμενος) tries to attain every being itself purely in itself, as much as possible liberated from the eyes and ears and, so to say, the whole body, as disturbing the soul and not giving it leave to own truth and wisdom, when participating'.

The acquisition of purification thus prepares the soul for contemplation, according to the great principle of our Father

the Theologian : 'πράξις γάρ, ἐπίβασις θεωρίας (for action is the access to contemplation)'; or to express myself more exactly, the intellect being innately (ἀδιδάκτως, as St Basil says) made for the contemplation of intelligible things (τὰ νοούμενα), immediately, and as soon as the propension to sensible things ceases, ipso facto, so to say, its natural propension (νεύσις) to intelligible things works. This latter propension has two quite distinct operations : the first operation is within the capacity of the physical powers of man (φυσικὴ δύναμις), considering the visible world as the Eikon of the invisible, attains the invisible through the visible (the only way possible to the physical power of our intellect), the invisible and eternal beauty through the visible beauties, the immaterial illumination through the material lights, etc. It is not safe for those who are not purified to practise this contemplation of visible things, because of the danger of being caught by their beauty.

For those who have faith, this purification engenders also an infused contemplation, which it would be inexact to call an 'operation' but should rather be called a 'passion' in the etymological sense. Symeon insists much on the idea that it is infused : 'the word of the infused wisdom' (έμφύτου σοφίας, i, 95). It is above the physical powers of the intellect. He also says, commenting on the Saviour's words that the pure of heart shall see God : 'If it is by a pure heart (διὰ τῆς καθαρᾶς καρδίας) that God, he says, is seen, when purity comes to pass, contemplation will necessarily (πάντως) ensue . . . If purification recurs here, here there shall also be vision ; if you say that the vision is after death, you necessarily place the purification also after death, and thus it shall occur to you that you shall never see God, because after the departure there will be no practice by which you will find purification' (On those who pretend to possess the Holy Ghost unconsciously). In the same discourse he brings forth various very convincing words from Scripture, commenting them with a profound exegesis, not at all resembling the shallow exegesis 'à la mode' in our days, which most often preoccupies itself with very accessory elements, leaving out altogether the 'theological' thought contained in the divine words, which every exegesis worthy of that name should strive above all (as the Fathers did) to bring to light, in the spirit of its author.

A propos of the above-quoted text, somebody might perhaps be induced to believe that Symeon, by conditioning the eternal vision to the contemplation which belongs to this life here below, a contemplation pre-supposing a high degree of spiritual life, is implying the exclusion from eternal life of all who have not reached that contemplation even though they might be in a 'state of grace'. This objection is of course extremely superficial. All these grades (fear of God, observance of the commandments, purification, illumination or contemplation, etc.) might be looked upon in a twofold way: as stages of the spiritual life, and as its principles, or its elements. As stages it might for example be said that illumination, and those who are in the stage of illumination, are respectively higher than fear and those who are in the stage of fear of God. But considered as principles of the spiritual life, as elements, as the substance of that life, these are acts which are all of them present at every stage of the spiritual life, and play their continuous rôle in the causal dependence indicated by Gregory in the fundamental text which is quoted at the beginning of this article. Considered in this latter sense, it follows that those who are at the stage of the fear of God (and among them are all those who are 'in a state of grace') are not totally devoid of illumination, and consequently it may not be said of them that they do not see God at all in this world, and certainly they may be saved even though their illumination may be very weak in comparison to those who have attained the higher stages. Also, those in the higher stages are not totally devoid of the fear of God (though its quality be different from that of the first stage) as might be witnessed from the following description of one of the higher stages: 'When one sees Him in His manifestation, he sees Light and is astonished on seeing, who is He who appears he knows not immediately—nay, he dares not ask Him (ἀλλ' οὐδὲ αὐτὸν ἐρωτῆσαι τολμᾷ): how is He whom he cannot see with his eyes and know, what is He like? he looks only, in great fear and tremor (ἐν φόβῳ καὶ τρόμῳ πολλῷ), as towards his feet, knowing that certainly someone has appeared before his face. And if he is present who has narrated to him about that, as having known God before him, he proceeds to him and says: I saw.—And he says: what, son, did you see?—Light, O Father, sweet.—Sweet? who?—My mind has not, Father, the capacity to tell you' (Id.).

This vision of God is variously described by Symeon, but especially as Light, as in the passage just quoted. It is the 'vision of the true and inaccessible light' (i, 14), the 'light of knowledge', the 'dwelling in the abyss of the divine Light (μένει ἐν τῷ βυθῷ τοῦ θείου φωτός, ii, 17), the pouring, as in the centre of an abyss of luminous infinite waters' (ἐν μέσῳ ἀβύσσου φωτοειδῶν ὑδάτων ἀπειρων ἐναπολειφθῆ, ii, 16), the 'possession inside oneself of the light of the all-holy Ghost' (iii, 21), the 'entry of all of oneself into the simple divine light' (ἐν ἀπλῷ εἰσδύν σόλος θείῳ φωτὶ, ii, 17), 'the intelligible light' (τὸ νοητὸν φῶς, i, 38), 'the manifestation of the Light of the Holy Trinity in the pure heart (τὸ φῶς τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος φαίνον ἐν καθαρῷ καρδίᾳ, i, 2) etc. Parallel to all these assertions of knowledge are to be found in his work apparently antagonistic assertions of darkness and ignorance: 'the development of the knowledge of God becomes the cause and means of the ignorance of all other things—nay even of God Himself, and the excess of his illumination complete blindness' (παντελῆς ἀβλεψία, ii, 2); 'those who are in participation of the divine Light, in as much as they advance in divine knowledge, rather fall proportionately into ignorance' (εἰς ἀγνωσίαν, ii, 13). But, as it is obvious from the words just quoted, this contradiction is only apparent: of course light cannot be darkness (Symeon also uses the word γνόφος, ii, 18), but it is darkness for us on account of its super-excessive brilliancy. Here Symeon rejoins especially the famous Dionysian current. 'The divine darkness', says Dionysius (5th Letter), 'is the inaccessible Light, in which God is said to dwell. And, He being invisible through the supernatural visibility, and inaccessible through the same superabundance of super-essential effusion of Light (διὰ τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τῆς ὑπερουσίου φωτοχυσίας), everyone held worthy of knowing God and of seeing him is found in it by the fact itself in a state of neither seeing nor knowing (αὐτῷ τῷ μὴ δρᾶν, μηδὲ γινώσκειν), having truly attained Him who is above vision and knowledge.' Because this union (which is, let us well remember, the 'normal' aim of every Christian life) is thus supereminent, it necessarily involves an 'ἐκστασις', a flight from everything visible and intelligible, and from oneself (this is the original and etymological sense of the word ἐκστασις, which is so expressive, and whose use in modern

languages has become rather degenerate), according to the Dionysian principle : 'ἐκστατικός δὲ θεῖος ἔρως divine love is ecstatic' (Divine names, 4), and 'he who, seeing God, as Dionysius says (1st Epistle), understands what he sees (συνῆκεν δὲ εἰδεν), has not seen Him, but some being and thing known in Him : He, being fixed in a superior manner above intellect and above essence, it is by the fact itself of being absolutely not known, neither being, that He is super-essentially, and is known above intellect'. This is why he who has attained that degree is, says Symeon (ii, 19), 'without activity and without motion, as having satisfied all his activity ; devoid of thoughts (ἀνέννοιος) as having become in the union which is above all thought and reposed where there is no activity of the intellect, that is no motion at all for reflexion or reasoning or conception : for he is incapable of thinking or examining the unthinkable and unconceivable'.

This union has been often described by Symeon as being a 'divinization' (θεώσις) : 'having become for this reason man, what he was not before, in order to make a god of man who had never become (god), divinizing us undoubtedly by his divinity (διὰ τῆς θεότητος θεώσας καὶ θεοποιῶν ἡμᾶς) and making us gods and not by his flesh alone which is also indivisible' (On those who pretend to possess unconsciously the Holy Ghost). He also says : 'When completely inflamed he becomes as light, then is accomplished what is said : God united to gods and known, and as much perhaps as He was united Himself to those who are attached to Him, and revealed Himself to those who have known him' (iii, 21). This language likens him very much to our Father Gregory the Theologian who, of all Fathers, has perhaps most theologized about 'divinization', and there is nothing temerarious in Symeon's reiterated assertions about becoming God, since the doctrine of 'divinization' understood in an orthodox manner is the nucleus of the whole of Christian dogma. As our Father Maxim the Confessor says : 'We have not by nature the power to receive the divinization' (οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν φύσει δεκτικὴν τῆς θεώσεως δύναμιν. On Theology iii, 75). Also : 'No created being is by nature factor of divinization, because not comprehensive of God' (Id iii, 76). Also : 'In Christ, God and Word of the Father, the whole plenitude of the divinity dwells bodily according to essence (κατ' ούσιαν) ;

but in us the plenitude of the divinity dwells according to grace' (*κατὰ χάριν*, *On Theology* ii, 21). This is why Symeon insists that 'man altogether becomes God according to grace' (*θεός κατὰ χάριν*). Man has been compared in this state to a piece of iron reddened by fire : this does not prevent it from remaining essentially a piece of iron. He is 'light in Light and not Light in himself' (*φῶς ὁν ἐν φωτὶ καὶ οὐ φῶς τὸ καθ' εἰντὸν* ii, 18). There is not the least shadow of pantheism, as has been calumniously asserted, in his doctrine. He always repeats that this happens 'according to the capacity, the potentiality of man' (*κατὰ τὸ ἐφικτὸν*). The exclusion of pantheism is also obvious from such words as these : 'The intelligible (sun) shines for ever and was shining, entirely contained without being contained in the whole universe, separated from his creatures, and wholly severed unseparately from them; He is wholly in the whole and nowhere, entirely in all the visible creatures and entirely outside them, entirely in the visible and entirely in the invisible, and wholly present everywhere and wholly nowhere' (ii, 25).

Let us, lastly, examine the analogy of the vision of God in this life with that of the life to come. Although Symeon's trend of thought and theological vocation has led him to insist much on the former, he is fully aware of the force of gravity and *βάρος* of the flesh, that pulls the intellect down. As Shakespeare says :

'Such harmony is in immortal souls ;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.'
(*Merchant of Venice*.)

This is why the words he uses are very careful, and when some of his words might give to some the impression that he is making the former equal to the latter, he always adds a restriction which underlines well the difference between them : 'the light of the Holy Trinity shining in the pure heart severs it from the whole world, and makes its participator filled from then on of the future glory, as much as is possible for a man (*κονόσον δινθρώπω χωρητὸν*) moved by the supernal grace, but still wrapped up in the veil of the flesh' (i, 2). Not that our actual flesh is bad or that it is condemned not to participate eternally in glory—on the contrary Symeon does

not exclude it from participation in the glory to come. But as it is now it is impossible for it to participate in that glory, as it happened to the Apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration, without a special, an extraordinary super-elevation, in accordance with the following principle of our Father Gregory the Theologian. 'It is impossible to the stiff consistence of the material body and the chained mind to come to the intelligence of God unaided' (Second on Easter). But then, when the flesh will be transformed by the Spirit, it will be of no hindrance. Symeon speaks even of a reverberation already in this life of the holy soul on the body: the impassibility (*άπάθεια*) of the soul, says he, 'sanctifies by its own brilliancy and by the effusion of the light of the Spirit (*φωτοχυσίᾳ τοῦ Πνεύματος*) the body also' (i, 86). In the life to come, when the mind is no longer chained (*δεσμίον νοῦν*) and diffused through the senses (*διαχειρέμενον ταῖς αἰσθήσειν* as our Father Gregory says): when it needs no longer to be conducted by matter (*ύλαις χειραγωγίᾳ χρήσατο*, Dionysius, Celestial Hierarchy, 1) analogizing intelligible things by the sensible; when 'naked (*γυμνός*), present in front of the naked and first and most pure mind' (Gregory), it shall enjoy a much higher vision, 'a purer and more perfect illumination of the Trinity' the 'whole of which shall be seen and seized by the whole mind (*ὅλης δλῶν νοτὸς θεωρουμένης τε καὶ κρατουμένης*)', in which clearer and more penetrating contemplation the kingdom of heaven solely resides, according to our Father Gregory (On dogma and constitution of bishops).

THE HYMNS OF N. F. S. GRUNDTVIG

THE Danish Lutheran Church in the nineteenth century produced at least two figures who are of universal Christian significance. The younger of them, Soren Kierkegaard, has already become deservedly known throughout Christendom; the elder, Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig is, for a variety of reasons, no more than a name for most Christians outside Scandinavia. Grundtvig, who was born in 1783 and died in 1872, was a man of almost superhuman energy and ability. One could write of him in many different ways, as an important figure in Danish literature and one of the pioneers in the rediscovery of Norse and Anglo-Saxon mythology and history; one could describe his work for the foundation of the Folk High Schools, the notable experiment in adult education, which began in the last century and still has a beneficial influence on the life of the Danish people. He could be portrayed as a great patriot, one who at a critical moment in the history of a small nation, helped it to rally its inner strength, and maintain its national identity. When it comes to his theological and religious writings, it is again possible to approach them in very different ways. For he is a man who, like F. D. Maurice, does not fit neatly into conventional categories, and whom it is only too easy to misunderstand. If we are to think of him in English terms, we should perhaps do best to imagine a combination of the artistic and social enthusiasms of William Morris, with the theological and philosophical interests of F. D. Maurice, joined to Charles Wesley's gifts as a writer of hymns! It is small wonder that a man of such diverse gifts and abilities should lend himself to misinterpretation, and that one whose whole life was so intimately bound up with the destinies of his own people should be difficult to understand from outside Denmark.

And yet I believe that there is a real though perhaps paradoxical sense in which Grundtvig's true greatness can only be fully recognized from outside his own country. The very richness and variety of his interests makes it difficult to distinguish those elements of his work which are of general Christian importance from what is of merely local and temporary interest. It is a misfortune that of the books so far published about him in English, none have fully succeeded

in doing this.¹ While within Denmark it is only during the last twenty years that Grundtvig's work has begun to be seen in a true perspective. The clue to the understanding of his life seems to lie in the recognition that despite the diversity of his activities, his was very far from being a dispersed or disorganized character. All his concerns were united around one point, his belief in God, so that the fact of God's sovereignty over the whole of human life is expressed in his life and action in a way which can be paralleled among very few nineteenth-century Churchmen. This being so it is dangerous to isolate any one aspect of his work from its place in the whole; for all his activities, even those concerned with what seem exclusively Danish problems are relevant to an understanding of him. And yet if we are to present Grundtvig in such a way as to reveal his universal Christian significance, we must concentrate our attention on what is central in his work; and in this article we shall restrict ourselves to his hymns which, I believe, contain the heart of his message, his confession of faith in God, the Holy Trinity.

But before we approach the hymns themselves, it will be necessary to sketch in, very briefly and in general terms, the early history of Grundtvig's religious convictions. The son of a country priest, at University he came under the influence of the ideas of the enlightenment. This brief rationalistic period was soon followed by a Romantic phase, in which he discovered the power of human love, and began to develop his own poetic gifts. From the same period dates the beginning of his interest in Norse mythology. In 1811 he underwent, what in England would have been called an Evangelical conversion experience, and became for a time a strict 'Bible Christian'. This experience involved an acute awareness of the reality of sin, and man's own powerlessness to overcome it. But it was not until 1823-24, after a period of severe depression, that his religious convictions took their final form, one which despite further developments was not substantially modified during the last fifty years of his long life.

What was the nature of this 1823-24 experience, which Grundtvig called 'the unparalleled discovery'? It was the

¹ Much the most valuable theologically is Professor P. G. Lindhart's *Grundtvig. An Introduction*, S.P.C.K. 1951; although it is a book distinctly marked by the author's own strongly held theological views.

discovery of the Church as a historic reality, and the realization that the Bible could only be understood within the life of the Church. It is not altogether easy to say what it was that led him, through much anguish of spirit, to be dissatisfied with the position of a 'Bible Christian'. He was aware of the problems being raised by the higher criticism for the old manner of conceiving the doctrine of biblical inspiration. But still more important to him was his belief as a poet, in the fact that it is the 'living word', spoken by word of mouth, that brings life, in a way that the dead letters printed in a book are never able to do. It is not possible here to go into all that the term 'living word' means in Grundtvig's thought; it must suffice to say that it plays a central part in his theory of language and education. Theologically it led him to see that it is impossible to build the Church on the Bible, but that rather we must place the Bible in the Church. As he himself says, we must place the open Bible on the Altar, and not imagine that we can construct the Altar on the book. Humanly speaking, it seems to have been the reading of Ireneus which gave Grundtvig this great intuition. But may we not also see here something more, a divine inspiration at work, an energy of the Holy Spirit, which awoke men as distant from one another as Khomiakov in Russia, as Möhler in Germany, as Maurice in England, to this same realization of the reality of the Church as a living historical organism?

But this Church of the living God, in Grundtvig's understanding of it, is very far from being simply an historical institution. It is the direct creation of God, of the Word and of the Spirit. It stands in the two great sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist, and in the Apostolic confession of faith. Grundtvig, like F. D. Maurice, saw in the sacraments and the creed, especially in the Apostles' Creed as used in Baptism, the foundation of the Church's life, and its continual safeguard against all the theories and systems of the theologians. It is in the sacraments, and Grundtvig will not hesitate to say, *only* in the sacraments, that we hear God's Word to us, God's creative Word, which brings into being the Church, the new people of God.

It seems important to point out that this 'unparalleled discovery' of Grundtvig represents in many ways a return (conscious or unconscious) to the earliest insights and

intuitions of Luther. For though Luther never speaks of the Bible as merely 'dead letters' in the way that Grundtvig does, for Luther too the Bible only comes to life and is fully understood as God's Word to us, when it is received by faith, in the congregation. Similarly Luther taught that there is a most intimate relationship between Word and Sacrament; that it is in Baptism that God speaks his Word of promise to us, and in the Holy Supper that we have the fullest assurance of Christ's presence with us. Undoubtedly Grundtvig's attitude seemed revolutionary in the non-sacramental atmosphere of early nineteenth-century Danish Christianity, whether pietist or rationalizing; and in so far as he put the Church before the Bible in the transmission of Christian faith, his viewpoint does indicate a real break with earlier Lutheran tradition. But we must not exaggerate the break involved, nor undervalue the classical Lutheran tradition, which in its understanding of the interconnection between Word and Sacrament contains a richness of teaching which rebukes the somewhat superficial juxtaposition of the two terms which has sometimes been common, for example, in Anglicanism.

One might have expected that from his stress on the Church as an historical organism, Grundtvig would have gone on to some conception of the ministry as performing a necessary part in creating the Church's continuous historical and sacramental structure. It is clear that he followed the development of the Oxford Movement with great interest, and at a certain stage felt a strong drawing towards the meaning and value of the episcopate.² But unfortunately his personal contacts with the Oxford men were not happy; and he was so repelled by the rigidity of the Tractarian *theory* of the Apostolic succession—which seemed to 'unchurch' the Danes altogether—that he later fell back from this position, with the result that his theory of the Church seems to lack its natural fulfilment and completion. In later life indeed, he came to think of the national Church in Denmark, as merely providing a framework in which the true Church might come and live, while not itself being a true part of the Church. Nevertheless there are suggestions in the hymns that Grundtvig never altogether

² Cf. P. G. Lindhart, *Grundtvig*, pp. 65-66. Grundtvig's second and crucial visit to Oxford took place in 1843, at a time when Newman had already lost all confidence in the Church of England, and Pusey had just been prohibited from preaching in the University.

lost sight of the element of historical continuity in the Church, though he thought of it more as preserved by the whole body of the faithful, than as mediated through the ministry. And in face of Professor Lindhardt's suggestion that for Grundtvig both Church and Sacraments are conceived simply as momentary, existential salvation-events, i.e. are thought of in exclusively vertical terms, one must assert that for Grundtvig, the two elements in the life of the Church, vertical and horizontal, were probably seen to be, as in fact they are, not mutually exclusive, but complementary one to another.

However this may be, nothing can detract from the power and vigour with which the hymns express the reality of the Church, the place where through the power of the Spirit, we hear God's Word to us in Baptism and Eucharist, and through our participation in them are ourselves able to go in the Spirit, through the Son to the Father. It is the living Trinitarian quality of these hymns which is memorable above all else. In a remarkable paragraph Professor Hal Koch comments on this fact, and in doing so indicates the range of Grundtvig's achievement. 'It cannot be denied', he writes, 'that a large number of Grundtvig's finest hymns, and especially of his original hymns, are hymns of the Holy Spirit. It is also quite true historically that while the period of the Enlightenment did not get much further than the first article of faith (i.e. belief in God the Father), and the pietist movement concentrated its attention on the second, Jesus' suffering and death, in Grundtvig's understanding of the Church, belief in the Spirit, the Word and the Church sprang up into new life. But what is peculiar to Grundtvig is this, that from his belief in the Spirit and His activity in the congregation, he went back to the second and to the first articles of faith. Not for nothing had the experience of 1810-11 been the turning point in his life, an experience in which Jesus had been present to him, as Saviour, he who has authority over those who believe in him. This did not become otherwise after 1824. On the contrary, rather he understood that our Lord Jesus has not concluded a particular covenant with each separate individual, but has called them into fellowship, and placed them in his Kingdom, where he rules through the Spirit and the Word. But from here Grundtvig went back . . . to the first article of faith, belief in God as Lord and Creator. Here we

find that he has recaptured the whole of the Enlightenment's belief in providence, and its happy optimism which praises the world as 'the best of all worlds', but on an entirely new plane. From this, his language about God as Creator and providence acquires an entirely different power, and blends in a remarkable way with what he says about Jesus as Lord and Saviour . . . With all that can be said about Grundtvig's preference and particular ability for writing hymns of the Holy Spirit, I believe despite everything that the true greatness of his hymn-writing depends on this unique union of all three articles of faith, so that each particular one of them becomes the chief concern in its place, but always so that the other two are present as a background and accompaniment.³ It is as though the doctrine of *perichoresis* had come to life in hymnody, and was present in our midst!

Grundtvig's determination to write hymns sprang originally from his dissatisfaction with the hymn book in use in the Danish Church during this period, a book which reflected only too well the individualism and moralism of much eighteenth-century religion. His first thought was simply to go back and adapt the hymns of the seventeenth-century Danish writer Kingo, but very soon he found himself engaged in a much more extensive operation. He began to write original hymns, and also to make translations from all the great periods of Christian hymnody. In his collected works there are at least forty translations from Latin, and almost as many from Greek. He also translated some of the great German Reformation hymns, and made adaptations of medieval vernacular poems, including translations from Anglo-Saxon. In a letter to his friend Ingemann written in 1837, he says, 'What makes me specially happy about this, is the bringing into harmony of notes from all the principle periods of the universal Church, things which in my work of compilation have met my eye and moved my heart'.⁴ Although Grundtvig's translations from the Greek and Latin are often extremely free, and more in the nature of paraphrases than translations,

³ Hal Koch, *Grundtvig*, Copenhagen 1943, pp. 200–01. This book consists of a series of lectures given by Professor Koch in the University of Copenhagen in the autumn of 1940, during the early months of the German occupation, which attracted such large audiences that they had to be repeated. I am deeply indebted to Professor Koch's interpretation of Grundtvig, throughout this article.

⁴ Uffe Hansen, *Grundtvig's Salmedigtning*, Vol. I, p. 275.

they convey very well the attitudes and teaching of their originals. And in his love for hymns of the Holy Spirit and the Ascension, and for hymns which express the Christus Victor conception of the Atonement, we may see not only a development of his own ideas, but an influence of his work as translator.

From what has been said so far it might seem that the hymns are excessively doctrinal and didactic in tone. But this is not at all the case. For though the hymns have a strongly theological and doctrinal backbone, they never treat of these great truths as abstract, but always as living and experienced in the worshipping life of the Christian congregation, a fact which gives them a wonderfully objective and congregational character. To quote again from Professor Koch, 'all his writing grows out of the certainty that there exists a living community, where our Lord Jesus is present in his Word, granting the forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life. The hymns are therefore in a special way, Church or community hymns, not "I-Hymns" but "we-Hymns" . . . Grundtvig points this out himself in a letter where he speaks of it as a "chief failing with our Fathers, which we their children must try to correct, that they wished to deal with our Saviour each for himself and to possess him, which can never be the case, as the 'Our Father' among other things should have taught them." It is therefore about God's acts in Creation, about the great facts of redemption, Jesus' life, death and resurrection, it is above all of the Holy Ghost and his activity in the community, of Baptism and Communion, of the living and creative Word, and of the Church, that Grundtvig sings. In a letter of 1843 he describes his plans for a hymn book for the use of the Vartov congregation, and says that the further he goes into the work, the clearer he sees that, on account of its modest size, the book will have very little space for what one is pleased to call *edifying* hymns 'that is to say those which each of us hums over quietly to himself and perhaps sings with a few good friends; for here the chief thing must be first and foremost, the Church, Baptism and Eucharist, and after that our Church festivals, and our Church gatherings in general'. There is something of the thunder of the organ and the Church's festival times in the hymns of Grundtvig.⁵

⁵ Hal Koch, op. cit., pp. 198-99.

This living, congregational quality in Grundtvig's hymns is reflected in the very style and language which he uses. It seems in so far as I can judge, to combine a remarkable richness of language and imagery with a very great simplicity and directness of diction. Particularly noticeable is the employment of proverbial sayings, and the occasional use of quite daringly colloquial and idiomatic phrases. From the point of view of poetic technique, we have here probably, an influence from his study of the ancient ballads and the living folk-poetry of his nation. But theologically and spiritually there are greater forces at work, and these daringly direct expressions are the outcome of his belief in, and understanding of the reality of Pentecost, his belief that the Spirit makes God's Word living and real for every people *in their mother-tongue*, a process which involves much more than the mere transposition of words from one language to another. Grace, far from destroying nature, takes everything that is good in the particular history and the particular genius of each different nation, and speaks God's Word in and through those particular circumstances.

This ability to express profound theological truths through the use of simple everyday expressions can be very well illustrated from the hymn which begins with the words, 'O God, we are in good hands, your hands good God'.⁶ It is a hymn which speaks of the way in which God is always bringing good from ill, 'despite all sin and death and sorrow', and it describes our powerlessness before the forces of evil, those forces which only 'the hero under the sign of the cross' can overcome. The last verse but one begins with the words 'God, we are in your hands, the two hands of love', but it is only in the final verse that the innermost meaning of the hymn, and the source of its inspiration are revealed, 'Your hands, one sang of old, are the Son and the Holy Ghost'. The idea of the hymn has come from a meditation on Ireneus, and throughout it expresses the patristic view of the atonement as a combat in which the hero of the cross, through the power of love, rescues us from the power of evil.

Another example of the conjunction of untechnical language with deep theology can be found in a hymn on the Baptism

⁶ *Danske Salmebog*, No. 493. This is the official, authorised hymn book of the Danish Church.

of our Lord ; so far as I know, one of a few hymns in a Western language which would be suitable for use at the Eastern feast of the Epiphany.⁷ Each verse of the hymn ends with the two lines, 'Here you see over the Baptism, the door of God's house stand open', thus making the whole hymn a confession of the manifestation of God's inner nature as Trinity in the Baptism of our Lord. A very interesting feature of this hymn, which again reveals Grundtvig's gift for expressing theological truth in vivid imagery is the description of John the Baptist as 'the angel-man' in whom the Old Testament is 'risen-up, alive', in contrast with the figure standing beside him, God's Son, in whom the New Testament is present ; 'here the plough meets the harvest, here the law meets grace' he comments in a pregnant phrase. The words 'angel-man' contain, of course, a reference to Malachi iii, but one cannot help wondering whether Grundtvig was familiar with the convention of Eastern iconography in depicting the Baptist as a man with angel's wings.

But if we are to judge the hymns aright, it is necessary to give one or two in full. For this purpose I shall use my own rather literal prose translations, aware that they convey little or nothing of the beauty of the originals. Verse translations into English of a number of Grundtvig's hymns have been made for the use of the Danish Lutheran community in America ; but these latter translations are not particularly successful poetically, and sometimes tone down the doctrinal content of the hymns. Here is a typical short hymn, which comes from the section of the hymn book headed 'Jesus Christ'.

'Praise and thanks and eternal glory/We offer to thee sweet Lord,/Jesus Christ, God's dear Son/For thy life and for thy death./Thanks for every Christmas time/which has opened the well spring of gladness./Thanks for every Easter morning/Which has destroyed the heart's sorrow.

Ascended Lord, eternal glory/is offered to thee in the angelic choir,/because in thy Spirit thou wilt/be present with thy little ones on earth :/thanks for every Whitsun day/delightful in the band of thy friends/which has shone forth over the earth,/with thy voice in every language.

Praise and thanks and eternal glory/for thy voice, which in our baptism/calls us to be God's dear children/and grants to

⁷ D.S., No. 122.

us the hope of glory,/for thy voice with the word of grace/
which comes to us as the Lord's table,/inviting us to come
and sit down/eternally in the joy of the Lord./⁸

In this hymn two features are especially noteworthy, and they are features which recur again and again in the hymns of Grundtvig. First there is the use of the three festivals of Christmas, Easter and Whitsun, to stand for the realities which they represent, both in the life of our Lord and the life of each Christian. In some hymns they are associated, perhaps somewhat arbitrarily with faith, hope and charity, and in some they are explicitly related one to another, as where it is said that 'Easter and Whitsun sprang out of Christmas'. But always Grundtvig's intention seems to be to make the Christian year into a living reality, and to activate in the congregation all the associations which gather around the different festivals. In doing this, we may be perfectly certain that he would not have been afraid of the richly human and pre-Christian associations which cluster around these occasions. Secondly, and still more important, we must notice the references to Baptism and Eucharist. One of the most impressive qualities of these hymns is the way in which they constantly and quite spontaneously refer to the sacraments. There is no hint of artificiality, no suggestion that they are being drawn in for polemical purposes ; nor, for the most part, are those hymns which are written specifically *about* the Sacraments, the most effective. What is so interesting is the way in which the hymns assume that the normal Christian act of worship will culminate in the Holy Communion, and will contain, as the Danish High Mass does, an explicit reference to the renewal of the baptismal covenant, in the recitation of the Apostles' Creed. Again and again we come across such expressions as that 'we hear the Lord's Word', or that 'the Spirit works', in, to translate literally, 'the Lord's Bath and the Lord's Board'. It is in these two acts that the life of the Church, and the life of each Christian is grounded. The sacraments are presented to us, not so much as *parts* of the Christian faith, but rather as the medium through which the whole faith becomes present and living for us.

A further illustration of the natural way in which the thought of the Communion enters into the hymns, may be

* D.S., No. 54.

found in a short and typical hymn to the Holy Spirit.^{*} 'Power from on high,/in appearance like fire/with the gladness of all tongues/came down upon God's congregation./Let us all thank God for his gifts.

Power from on high,/God's Spirit draws us together,/from east and west, from south and north,/as guests at the Lord's Table./Let us all thank God for his gifts.

Power from on high/delights us in our mind,/as the Lord's People with the peace of Heaven/chosen for the Lord's blessedness./Let us all thank God for his gifts.'

The hymns for Baptism and Confirmation are equally interesting, and some of them reveal Grundtvig at his most daring and creative. For instance this Confirmation hymn may be cited, 'The father of falsehood we renounce/a lie is all his pride and pomp ; the father of truth, that we may please/we here renew our baptismal pact./He can do all, and he knows all,/and all he does is done in love,/in his image he has made us,/and has brought back that which was lost.

God gave us his Son to be our brother/Jesus Christ, God and man,/Joyfully we praise his mother,/The virgin bride of heaven ;/on the cross he suffered for us,/overcame death and hell,/on his throne of might he shares/life and light and gladness with us.

God gave us his Spirit to be our Comforter,/in our Lord Jesus' name,/he with all angel voices/calls men into the Lord's arms,/breathes, with our Saviour's words,/peace into the troubled breast,/grants, with God the Father's voice,/flesh to know eternal life.

This is the pact which is concluded/in the great soul-bath,/this is the grace exceeding great/in the great King's city:/The pledge of life, and the ground of faith/in our heart, and in our mouth/shield against all fiery darts,/mother's lap for tired child.

Here is the bird, which on its wings/carries faith with the Lord's voice ;/here is the word, which God's finger/ writes in every Christian breast ;/here is the key cunningly wrought/to God's house and Heaven's door ;/here is the light on the golden stand/which makes night as clear as day.

Our Father in heaven's high hall,/be mindful of thy covenant with us./Spirit of Truth in deep dale,/strengthen,

seal them now,/glorify with thy ray upon earth/the Saviour in the word of faith./Make it plain that every day/God is mighty in the weak.¹⁰

In this hymn we can see the theological genius which could realize the fusion of Baptism and Confession of Faith; which in the second verse can summarize in eight lines the whole economy of God the Son; the incarnation issuing in the glorification of the Mother of God, the cross, the triumph over death and sin, culminating in the heavenly session of Christ, and the giving of gifts unto men. But we can also notice several characteristic points of style. There is the 'kenning', rather in the style of Anglo-Saxon poetry in the curious term 'soul-bath'. There is the even more startling juxtaposition of the biblical image of 'the shield of faith', with the original image of 'the mother's lap for tired child', a clear indication, if one were needed, of Grundtvig's belief in the inspiration of his own verse. Another point which needs to be underlined is the contrast between the clarity of the first part of the hymn, the three dogmatic verses, and the comparative obscurity of the second part, in which Grundtvig indulges in a riot of poetic imagery. The last three verses have at times something of the nature of a riddle. For instance 'the wings' at the beginning of verse 5, do they refer to the wings of the heavenly dove which bring down God's voice at the Baptism of our Lord, or are they rather the eagle's wings which bear us up into the presence of God? The quality of obscurity in these verses is itself very typical of their author. For in reaction to the 'enlightenment' of the eighteenth century, he would have held that there was much in man's life, and still more in the mystery of God which is obscure to man's reason, which can indeed only be understood in riddles (it is one of his favourite terms), enigmas, and in the mysteries of the faith. If at times, this feeling for riddles, derived in part from the sagas and legends of the North, led Grundtvig into an almost wilful obscurity, at other times, for instance in this hymn, it reflects a profoundly Christian insight into the nature of language. The Bible speaks for preference in the language of poetic imagery. And it does not seem inappropriate here to quote some words of a contemporary Orthodox theologian, known for the ardour and precision of his thought. 'Whenever

¹⁰ D.S., No. 411.

the thought of the Fathers . . . touches on this mysterious reality [he is speaking of the Holy Spirit] it renounces the dogmatic expressions which are customary to it. It is no longer a deliberate, logical theology . . . the key changes, and the Fathers begin to speak another language, as if their whole being responded to the contact with the most intimate, the most personal mystery, which filled them with a limitless wonder, a sort of intoxication.¹¹ There are in the writings, of Grundtvig not a few traces of this 'sober drunkenness of which the Fathers speak.

But of all the hymns of Grundtvig perhaps none are more impressive than a group of what we may call 'Sunday hymns'. They are hymns which celebrate Sunday as a day of rejoicing and triumph, the day of the resurrection, the day of the coming of the Spirit. It is a day in which Christians are called to enter into the victory of their Lord. Grundtvig was, despite all the optimism of his spirit, too good a Lutheran, one might even say too good a Christian, to ignore the seriousness of death or the reality of the cross. Indeed he seems to have had more than his fair share of that horror of death which is characteristic of Scandinavia, and of much Lutheranism. The joy of these Sunday hymns is therefore always to be seen against the background of the struggle and agony of the cross. And here again we find a vivid expression of the reality of the atonement in terms of Christ's victorious battle with the powers of evil.¹² 'Sunday morning from the dead/Jesus arose in triumph,/ every Sunday's dawn/now brings healing to death/and wonderfully recalls/all the life of the Lord.

Thousand-tongued the Lord's words/are then reborn throughout the world :/wake now from sleep and sloth/ every ear which can hear./Arise, soul from the dead/and greet the dawn of Easter.

Every Sunday makes death shudder/and makes darkness tremble underground,/for there where Christ gives light and glory/the word of life speaks in giant-tones,/and with joy of victory does battle/with the king of death and power of darkness.'

¹¹ Quoted from a lecture of Vladimir Lossky's in *Messager de l'Exarchat du Patriarche Russe en Europe Occidentale*, Nos 30, 31, 1959, p. 175.

¹² D.S., No. 372.

Still more striking is another hymn belonging to the same series. In it, as in the hymn quoted above, we can see how the realities of the divine life, are not thought of as things to be remembered, but as things which take possession of all our human life and give it meaning and eternity. In this translation, I have attempted to give some indication of the rhythmical pattern of the original, though without reproducing the rhyme scheme. It is a hymn which employs a more developed poetical technique than some of the others, and which at the end rises to a veritable ecstasy of joy. The inadequacy of the translation therefore becomes more than ever apparent.¹³ 'This is the day which the Lord hath made,/ this gladdens the hearts of his servants ;/This day, of heaven he opened the gates,/this shall each Sunday resound./For in these thrice-sacred hours/triumphant from death arose God's Word,/gracious from heaven his Spirit came down./ Now do you see why the bells ring ?

Save now, O Lord, give gladness and luck,/to-day the work is thine own./Let all the world thank thee at even/for giving us rest and refreshment./Let us sing praises with gladness/ to the Spirit who freely speaks and comforts/blessing the people in thy name,/making thy peace to be present.

O Lord, our God descend in thy glory,/here in thy Church where we meet thee./May our songs weave thee crown upon crown,/all that our hearts are on fire with./The festivals grow with the seasons,/Easter and Whitsun sprang out of Yule,/ so let thy joyfulness grow from faith,/joy which can never be equalled.

Yes, let thy font and thy table so work/with all our language of worship,/that men may hear that thy Spirit and Word/are they who are speaking and singing./Yea, let us taste it and feel it :/the Spirit is better than flesh and blood,/The Lord is delightful and ever-good./He crowns all our days with his goodness.'

Owing to the poverty of the translations it has not been possible in this introduction to Grundtvig's hymns to convey much of the splendour of the originals. Nor has their variety been fully represented, for I have confined myself to the simpler and more liturgical among them, at the expense of some of the more lyrical and personal pieces, like the baptismal

¹³ D.S., No. 368.

hymn, 'Sleep sweetly, little child'. There is indeed a great variety among these hymns. On the one hand we can find hymns of praise, like the magnificent one based on Psalm 103, which seems truly to recapture the psalmist's certainty of the goodness of God.¹⁴ 'Soul be thou mindful God's praise to be singing,/early and late, for he always is good./ He who will pardon till seventy times seven,/Who all thy misery cures in his love./' And on the other hand we can see the reality of sin and repentance, expressed in Grundtvig's metrical version of the Agnus Dei which has already been incorporated into the text of the Danish Liturgy, and is sung as the people approach the altar.

But I hope that what has been written will be sufficient to indicate two things. First, that the Grundtvig revealed to us in these hymns is a figure not only of interest in Scandinavia, or among Lutherans, but is rather a man of universal Christian significance; and further that whatever limitations there may have been in his personal theology, in his hymns he speaks in the language of Christian orthodoxy. The richness of this one element in a life so active and diverse, suggests to us something of the stature of the whole man. Secondly, I hope that it has been apparent that these hymns have a particular relevance and importance for our situation in the English-speaking world to-day. It has been remarked for some time now that one of the factors which prevents the liturgical movement from taking real hold of the hearts and minds of ordinary Christian people is the lack of hymns to give expression to its deeper convictions. In former ages of the Church's history, hymnody has played a vital part in making it possible for members of ordinary congregations to assimilate the Church's faith. Now in the twentieth century we need a new activity of hymn writing if the liturgy is truly to become the people's work. And surely these hymns of Grundtvig's, which live out so fully the meaning of the Church's year, and express with such vigour the belief that it is the Holy Spirit which is at work in the congregation drawing men together into one around God's Holy Table, supply just the want of which we are conscious. May it not be possible that they will find a translator adequate to their power, or at least inspire someone else to write afresh in their vein?

¹⁴ D.S., No. 3.

THE GREEK EAST AND THE LATIN WEST

IN the later months of 1959, there appeared a book by Dr Philip Sherrard entitled *The Greek East and the Latin West*, a study in the Christian tradition which attempted to discover the causes of the present unhappy spiritual condition of Europe in the light of developments in Latin and Greek Christendom which have led to a progressive rationalization and secularization of Christian belief, and a corresponding growth of materialism and anthropocentricity in human society. In general, it received a favourable reception from reviewers, even from those who disagreed with many of the author's contentions. It was abundantly clear that Dr Sherrard was a keen student of Plato and of the Greek Fathers. His reading was profound, within rather narrow limits. Finally, and most important perhaps, he had ideas. Unlike those scholars who have dealt with the divisions between eastern and western Christians, and who have been at pains to emphasize the rôle of non-theological factors—a good representative would be Sir Steven Runciman's Waynflete Lectures, subsequently published as *The Eastern Schism* (Oxford 1955), Dr Sherrard saw the primary cause of division between East and West as being of a spiritual and ideological order. Like the late Vladimir Lossky, he refused to admit that theological differences might be the product of historical circumstances: 'To assume, as modern historians often do, that what lay behind an issue which involved some of the greatest minds of Christendom, and even, indeed, saints, were but factors of a political, economic, or cultural nature, reveals, to say the least, an astonishing impudence, of a kind only possible in an age in which the understanding of anything that surpasses the material level has practically ceased to exist' (Sherrard, p. 50). Such a protest was well made, and will certainly be echoed by many people; for it was not unpleasant, at a time when much ecumenical utterance is tempered with an extreme delicacy, to find a man who is prepared to speak his mind.

Nevertheless, it is possible, while recognizing Dr Sherrard's talents and sincerity, to regard his book as a bad one, and to regret that it should have appeared in the form in which it did. The gravamen of the complaint which will be directed against

Dr Sherrard in this article is very simple: that he has simply been inaccurate, and has attempted to build a case upon faulty evidence. This would not, in itself, be serious—anyone can get his facts wrong in good faith—but in the case of *The Greek East and the Latin West* it is singularly unfortunate, because it involves a good deal of special pleading in the interest of the Greeks, and serves to emphasize Dr Sherrard's rather curious attitude to history. 'Christianity', he writes, '... perhaps because it stressed very strongly from the beginning the personal relationships of God and man, Creator and created, has tended . . . to attribute to particular historical events and personages an almost absolute value in themselves. History is the epiphany of God, the scene of action of a divine-human drama of cosmic significance, and God is a personality who not only creates, but ceaselessly intervenes in time. Historical events and personages are expressions of the divine will, and, as such, are concrete and intrinsically significant "situations" of man in the face of God. So great in fact has been the value given to historical events and personages that not only has their essentially relative nature when compared with the "eternal now" of the extra-temporal world been obscured; but it has even been forgotten altogether that Christianity possesses a genuinely metaphysical, and therefore non-historical, side. Yet if Christianity were merely a historical religion, as is often maintained, and especially by those who imagine that in this way they demonstrate its superiority over religions tending to devalue temporal processes, then it would not be the revelation of God; or, at least, it would be only a very partial revelation of God, such, in fact, as would make Christianity the equivalent of the Mosaic Law, while it is precisely the interior, and metaphysical, reality of this Law that Christ reveals' (p. 30). What Dr Sherrard means by 'metaphysical' in this context is, no doubt, clear to himself; but it is significant that when Christ came to explain the Law in the matter of loving our neighbour, he drew a very unmetaphysical picture of a man lying naked and wounded on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, and of three men who saw him, one of whom being a Samaritan. And it may be remarked that the declaration of Judaism: 'Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God, the Lord is one', is a great deal less historical (and therefore more metaphysical?) than the Christian creeds,

with their emphasis on the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord.

In the light of his opinions, one may ask why Dr Sherrard chose to cast his book in an historical form at all; and the answer presumably lies in the fact that Christianity remains, obstinately, historical, and requires its adherents to give an answer to the challenge of the historian, and to give an honest answer. In Dr Sherrard's case, without wishing to impugn the honesty of his intentions, it is difficult not to feel that he is quite arbitrary in his use of facts to buttress his thesis, and quite indifferent to any thought of an historical time-scale. Perhaps his most alarming trait is a tendency to quote from Gregory Palamas, and to present the latter's famous distinction between the Divine Essence and the Divine Energies as if it were a traditional part of Christian doctrine. No doubt Dr Sherrard would reply that, so far as he is concerned, it is; but he must be well aware that this view will not be shared by most western Christians, whether Catholic or Protestant. As it is, a reader with no knowledge of Byzantine history, could read the book through, and never find a hint of the Palamite controversy, or realize that the distinction between Essence and Energies is not accepted by Latin theologians. The student is entitled to better treatment from the historian.

Again, in seeking to contrast the pre-Christian worlds of Greece and Rome, Dr Sherrard is decidedly dogmatic. 'There has been, until recently, a tendency to treat pre-Christian Greek and Roman culture as a single unity, to describe it as "pagan", and to assume that that term covers a common spiritual orientation dating from, say, Minoan times down to those of the last non-Christian Emperor. This is so clearly a falsification of the true state of affairs that it hardly calls for any further comment [although Dr Sherrard might have told us what scholars he had in mind. His declaration comes as news to some of us]. That, however, there is a certain lineal descent to be traced between the conceptions of the later philosophers of ancient Greece—one may specify Aristotle—and those of Roman thinkers such as Cicero cannot be denied. One might perhaps say that a certain exteriorization of thought took place with the later Greek philosophers, and that it was in its exterior form that, generally

speaking, Rome inherited from Greece the main structure of her philosophy' (p. 5).

Dr Sherrard goes on to contrast Plato, in whose view man achieves his highest purpose through the contemplation of, and participation in, the realities of a supra-individual order (p. 8), and Aristotle, whose ideal is of a purely human excellence, which cannot be realized outside the social order, since man is an animal whose potentialities are only realized within the *polis* (pp. 10-11). Throughout the book, Plato and Platonism are objects of commendation, Aristotle of depreciation and suspicion. *O testimonium animae Platonicae naturaliter Christianae* is, one might say, a recurring theme!

Now many of us will feel that neither Plato nor Aristotle need be invoked as a Christian ally (Dieu d'Abraham, Dieu d'Isaac, Dieu de Jacob ; non des philosophes et des savants !) but if they are to be brought into the matter, is there any real ground for Dr Sherrard's picture of a fundamental opposition between them, and of a lineal descent from the conceptions of Aristotle to those of Cicero ? We all know Strabo's story of how the works of Aristotle were brought to Rome by Sulla and published by Andronicus of Rhodes, but does this prove that they exercised an influence on the Roman mind comparable with that of Stoicism ? Have we any ground for believing that the average Greek of classical times—as opposed to the little knot of intellectuals who devoted themselves to philosophy—had any taste for Platonic speculation, and would not cheerfully have accepted Aristotle's view of man as *politikon zoön* ? And even if we turn to Plato himself, we can find in his writings evidence of interest in political matters not inferior to Aristotle's. It is the author of the *Republic* who, at the end of his life, provides minutely (and revoltingly), for the police state of the *Laws*. (Needless to say, the dark shadow of Professor Popper never crosses Dr Sherrard's path.)

In fact, Dr Sherrard's picture of the pre-Christian Greco-Roman world is an imaginary one. 'The [Roman] gods', he writes, 'are man-created, officially sponsored inhabitants of the City State, maintaining its life, protecting its armies and institutions, presiding over its order' (p. 16). And what else, one may ask, were the Olympians ? Several pages (pp. 16-19) are devoted to the cult of the Caesars, but Dr Sherrard hardly

notices the worship of such very human characters as Demetrius Poliorcetes and the other divine kings of the Hellenistic Age. If, instead of painting his hypothetical picture of a fundamental cleavage between Plato and Aristotle, he had read and reflected upon Professor Baynes' famous Bryce Lecture, *The Hellenistic Civilisation and East Rome*, he would have been better able to paint a picture of the background to the rise of Christianity, and of the thought-world in which it appeared. As it is, there are two highly important features of the Greco-Roman world in the first centuries of the Christian Church which he utterly ignores. The first is superstition. 'Part of man's daily, hourly fear is the demon world which besets him on every side. Whence came these myriad foes of man? Are they invaders of Greece from Iran, a legacy of the Persian world which Alexander had planned to take into partnership? or were they always there in the Greek countryside, banished only from the city-state where rationalism had rendered men immune from supernatural terrors—are they the Keres which in the earliest days of Greece filled land and sea—have they merely changed their name?' (Baynes, op. cit., reprinted in *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays*, London, 1935, 6-7.) Of this element in the Greek world, Dr Sherrard says nothing. He does not even hint at the answer: 'The atmosphere of the Hellenistic Age will continue to be the atmosphere of the Byzantine world, but that world has added to the Hellenistic pharmacopoeia the most powerful wonder-working charm—the Sign of the Cross. Armed with this the East Roman can venture to face those principalities and powers, those cosmic rulers in this dark world with whom the Christian's bout is waged' (Baynes, p. 8). Of the superstitious, of the miraculous side of Greek East and Latin West, Dr Sherrard says nothing; but he must be aware that for most Greeks, a wonder-working icon is of far greater significance than any Platonic doctrine, and that the *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschus is a far more revealing document than the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius.

The second feature in Dr Sherrard's chapters on the Roman Background and the Advent of Christianity which must be criticized is the simplification of the philosophical situation. The idea of a struggle between Platonism and Aristotelianism which haunts his imagination, with Plato in the right and

Aristotle very much in the wrong, is simply inadequate. Apart from the question as to whether Aristotle exercised any great influence at the beginning of the Christian era, the complete omission of any reference to Stoicism leaves a yawning gulf in the structure of the book. Furthermore, when we come to the age of the Fathers, it is arguable that the strongest influence is not so much that of Plato, as of Plato seen through the eyes of Philo and the Neo-Platonists. It is from them that we have the notion, so congenial to Christian thought, of the Ideas as thoughts in the mind of God, which is not to be found in Plato. Moreover, despite the name which posterity has assigned to them, the Neo-Platonists were not hostile to Aristotle but, on the contrary, were prepared to avail themselves of his writings, especially in the department of physics, where Plato had not spoken adequately. Indeed, the philosophy of the Fathers is neither Platonism, nor Neo-Platonism; there are no conflicting schools in the later Roman empire; the one 'school' is the *philosophia perennis*, partly Platonic, partly Aristotelian, partly Stoic. As late as the eleventh century, Anna Comnena, with characteristic modesty, felicitated herself on having read with care the system of Aristotle and the dialogues of Plato, and fortified her mind with the *quadrivium* of sciences. But of all this, Dr Sherrard says nothing.

I have dealt elsewhere¹ with some of the factual errors of *The Greek East and the Latin West* and do not wish merely to reiterate them. I am, however, inclined upon reflection to condemn even more strongly than I did both the assertion that man possesses, in addition to his soul and body, a third faculty or power, which is both image of God, or spiritual principle in him, and the uncreated cause of his created nature (pp. 139-40); and the travesty of Augustine's thoughts which makes the saint hold that 'what knowledge [man] has or can acquire is in himself', and asserts that 'there is . . . very little fundamental difference between man as envisaged by Augustine and man as envisaged by Descartes' (p. 145). Of the idea of the 'uncreated cause' in man, it can only be said that this doctrine, if not Manichaean, is Neo-Platonist, and basically unchristian, being precisely the sort of pagan conception against which Justin Martyr was cautioned by the old man who brought him to Christianity: if the soul is

¹ *Sobornost*, Series 4, No. 3, Summer 1960.

immortal, it is not because it is so by nature, as Plato teaches, but because it receives immortality from God ; the soul lives because God wills it to live, and for as long as God so wills. 'Cette réponse', comments Professor Gilson, 'nous paraît aujourd'hui d'une simplicité qui confine à la banalité, mais elle marquait avec netteté la ligne de démarcation qui sépare le Christianisme du platonisme' (*La philosophie au Moyen Age*, 2e éd., Paris 1947, 17). As to the observations regarding St Augustine, a charge of Ontologism would be equally unjust, but it would at least be nearer the mark. God, for Augustine, is the sun of the soul ; intellectual truths cannot be understood unless they are illuminated by another as by their sun (*Soliloquia*, I, viii, 15 : 'ea non posse intelligi, nisi ab alio quasi suo sole illustrentur'. Cf. *De Pecc. Mer. et Rem.*, I, xxv, 38 : 'Verumtamen etiam ipse [homo], quamvis iam creatus oculus, necesse est in tenebris maneat, si non credit in eum qui dixit : *Ego lux in saeculum veni, ut omnis qui credit in me non maneat in tenebris*'.) Gilson's verdict on Augustinianism is likely to be that of anyone who has seriously studied the matter : 'In the first place, it is a Christian philosophy : this expression does not simply mean that his was the philosophy of a Christian, for a man may be a Christian and a philosopher without holding a Christian philosophy—Réné Descartes would be a quite good instance. What, on the contrary, is characteristic of the thought of St Augustine is that, in his case, revelation is the source, rule, and even the very food of his rational thought ; he holds faith to engender reason, and dogma, taken as such, to engender philosophy', ('The Future of Augustinian Metaphysics', in *A Monument to St Augustine*, London, 1930, 289–90). *Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis*. If Dr Sherrard had bestowed upon St Augustine even a part of the energy he bestowed upon the Greek Fathers, he would have given us a more accurate assessment of the greatest of the Latin Doctors.

Why are Dr Sherrard's errors so serious ? Partly because they involve facts which, with a little thought and research, could be avoided ; partly because they involve generalizations upon great issues where caution is absolutely essential. One of the fiercest accusations brought against Christians in the nineteenth century by Rationalists was that they were, in effect, dishonest ; that they refused to take into account the uncomfortable evidence provided (so their enemies considered),

by Natural Science and by Biblical Criticism. Such a view probably persists ; Mr Edmund Wilson, in his somewhat superficial book, *The Scrolls from the Dead Sea*, said frankly : 'One would like to see these problems discussed ; and, in the meantime, one cannot but ask oneself whether the scholars who have been working on the scrolls—so many of whom have taken Christian orders or been trained in the rabbinical tradition—may not have been somewhat inhibited in dealing with such questions as these by their various religious commitments' (p. 129). I do not think this view was justified with regard to the majority of those who worked on the Qumran documents ; but it would, I am afraid, seem to be a valid criticism of much of Dr Sherrard's book. He makes historical errors from which he could be saved by a little thought ; and he takes a point of view favourable to the Easterns, without declaring his sympathies. Such treatment is to my mind, fatal to a true understanding of history, and harmful to Christianity. It is not a matter of judging God by historical truth ; as Christians we believe that God *is* Truth, and therefore requires the greatest honesty of which we are capable. No doubt we are not capable of very much ; but it is at least our duty to do all we can, establish our facts to the best of our ability, and make clear where our facts end, and our opinions begin. I do not think that Dr Sherrard has done so.

There is, also, another consideration, hardly noticed in *The Greek East and the Latin West*, but of great importance to anyone who seriously considers the agonizing situation of a divided Christendom. Most of us will agree that we shall not end our divisions by seeking some Highest Common Factor of belief ; and in this respect, we can accept Dr Sherrard's contention that doctrinal differences are significant, and cannot simply be ascribed to historical, economic and social forces. It is, however, of the greatest importance to realize that it is possible to be right for the wrong reason, and to hold the Faith, but not in charity. This consideration has an immediate relevance for those of us who are involved in ecumenical relations. Suppose we read of some crisis in some Christian body not of our own communion, concerning perhaps the Church of South India, woman ministers, the Dogma of the Assumption or what you will. Is our first reaction the thought : 'How characteristic of these Roman Catholics/Orthodox/

immortal, it is not because it is so by nature, as Plato teaches, but because it receives immortality from God ; the soul lives because God wills it to live, and for as long as God so wills. 'Cette réponse', comments Professor Gilson, 'nous paraît aujourd'hui d'une simplicité qui confine à la banalité, mais elle marquait avec netteté la ligne de démarcation qui sépare le Christianisme du platonisme' (*La philosophie au Moyen Age*, 2e éd., Paris 1947, 17). As to the observations regarding St Augustine, a charge of Ontologism would be equally unjust, but it would at least be nearer the mark. God, for Augustine, is the sun of the soul ; intellectual truths cannot be understood unless they are illuminated by another as by their sun (*Soliloquia*, I, viii, 15 : 'ea non posse intelligi, nisi ab alio quasi suo sole illustrentur'. Cf. *De Pecc. Mer. et Rem.*, I, xxv, 38 : 'Verumtamen etiam ipse [homo], quamvis iam creatus oculus, necesse est in tenebris maneat, si non credat in eum qui dixit : *Ego lux in saeculum veni, ut omnis qui credit in me non maneat in tenebris*'.) Gilson's verdict on Augustinianism is likely to be that of anyone who has seriously studied the matter : 'In the first place, it is a Christian philosophy : this expression does not simply mean that his was the philosophy of a Christian, for a man may be a Christian and a philosopher without holding a Christian philosophy—Réné Descartes would be a quite good instance. What, on the contrary, is characteristic of the thought of St Augustine is that, in his case, revelation is the source, rule, and even the very food of his rational thought ; he holds faith to engender reason, and dogma, taken as such, to engender philosophy', ('The Future of Augustinian Metaphysics', in *A Monument to St Augustine*, London, 1930, 289–90). *Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis*. If Dr Sherrard had bestowed upon St Augustine even a part of the energy he bestowed upon the Greek Fathers, he would have given us a more accurate assessment of the greatest of the Latin Doctors.

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Anglicans/Lutherans, etc. !' with the comforting reflection that other people's troubles may lead to an improvement of the position of our own communion in the world ; or do we feel sympathy for Christian brethren in a period of trial, and pray that they may be granted a happy issue out of their difficulties ? If our feelings are the former, then however rightly we may hold the Faith, we have failed in greater virtue of Charity.

It is in the light of this reflection, that Dr Sherrard's views about the divisions between East and West should be considered. Nobody is going to question the thesis that, if we hold the unity of the Faith in the bond of Charity, no principalities or powers, and no course of events in the world, will bring divisions among us. But it must be in the bond of Charity ; and this, it seems to me, is the fundamental explanation of the breach between Greeks and Latins in the Middle Ages. At one point in his book, Dr Sherrard hovered on the brink of grasping it : 'The Crusades . . . could not have taken place in a world in which the principles of the Christian religion were fully understood . . .' (p. 50). Similarly, one may feel, a greater grasp of Christian principles might have discouraged the Byzantine malignants from their growing preference—which was all too soon granted to them—for the Turkish turban rather than the Papal tiara ; though (perhaps appropriately) in the event they discovered that the great church of Haghia Sophia, which they had refused to enter when polluted by union worship, still remained closed to them after the Turkish victory, because it had become a mosque. If the Latins had shown greater consideration for the Greeks and had not, after 1204, embarked upon that disastrous and most unchristian, attempt to impose Latin prelates and practices upon the Byzantines ; if the Greeks, while firmly maintaining the traditional doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit, had shown something of the understanding of Theophylact of Bulgaria ; and if both sides had determined to maintain (by the grace of God) the union, it may be that the tragic divisions which now afflict us might never have arisen.

This view, of course, runs counter, not only to Dr Sherrard, but also to the late Professor Lossky, when he wrote : 'We must accept facts as they are, and not seek to explain the difference between Eastern and Western spirituality on racial or cultural

grounds when a greater issue, a dogmatic issue, is at stake. Neither may we say that the questions of the procession of the Holy Spirit or of the nature of grace have no great importance in the scheme of Christian doctrine, which remains more or less identical among Roman Catholics and among Orthodox. In dogmas so fundamental as these it is this "more or less" which is important, for it imparts a different emphasis to all doctrine, presents it in another light; in other words, gives place to another spirituality' (*The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, E.T., London, 1957, 22). It is possible that he is right and I am wrong. I do not wish to suggest that 'mere' dogmatic differences are of no account; what I do want to urge is, that we must first be quite clear about the nature of these differences, and then decide whether they are significant in themselves, or whether they afford a convenient pretext for expressing our own local pride and uncharitableness. It is clear that there are doctrinal differences about which there can be no compromise; and Gibbon's notorious sneer, in his description of the Arian controversy, about the importance attached to one letter, and that the smallest of the Greek alphabet, is out of place. But have the divergencies between East and West—even the *Filioque*—ever been seriously reckoned as being of the same nature as those implied by *homoousios* and *homoiousios*? and are we really as clear about those differences as we should be? There is good reason, for example, to think that Augustine, who is commonly assumed to have been the originator of the doctrine of the Double Procession, was in fact a great deal nearer to the teaching of the Greek Fathers than has been supposed. Energy would be better expended on a dispassionate survey of doctrinal divergencies, than by the sort of attempt which Dr Sherrard has made to treat the course of Eastern and Western relations in a book of just over two hundred pages. Furthermore, any serious attempt must be based upon a familiarity with both sides, and with a determination, so far as it is given to any man, to hold an even balance. Finally, only a fixed determination to check factual accuracy will be of any value. These requirements are lacking in Dr Sherrard's book, and must, I think, considerably detract from its value to the serious student.

GERALD BONNER.

A NOTE ON THE FESTIVAL COMMEMORATING THE PRIMACY OF PETER

It is a known liturgical oddity that the festival of the Primacy of Peter, which was kept in the Roman and the Gallican churches from about the fourth to the eighth century, is no longer celebrated in the West.¹ The date on which it used to be observed was 22nd February, which now commemorates the chair of Peter at Antioch and is a doublet of the chair of Peter at Rome on 18th January. Originally 22nd February was regarded as the day on which Peter had received the promise of the keys of the kingdom of heaven and the power to bind and to loose, and was thus linked with the actual occasion in the gospel of Matthew, and not with Peter's later position as bishop of Antioch or of Rome. The collect still used for both 18th January and 22nd February is clearly relevant to this earlier commemoration: 'Deus, qui beato Petro apostolo tuo, collatis clavibus regni coelestis, ligandi atque solvendi pontificium tradidisti . . .' though it is not as explicit as the collect for the day in the eighth century Bobbio Missal: 'Deus, qui hodierna die beato Petro post te dedisti caput ecclesiae, cum te ille vere confessus sit et ipse a te digne prelatus sit . . .'

Although the commemoration of the Primacy of Peter has not survived where one might have expected to find it most securely established, it is kept, though at a different time of year, in the Coptic Church. In the Alexandrian synaxarion, one of the entries for the 7th Nahase (13th August) is the Confession of Peter, when he became the chief of the apostles, the head of the hierarchy and the greatest of all princes.² It seems unlikely that this commemoration in August was influenced by the one in February; if so, one might have expected identification of date between the two. Yet if there is no connection it is difficult to see why the Coptic Church should have introduced this particular commemoration. It is possible, though this is pure hypothesis, that it is kept on 7th Nahase because the latter is six days before the festival

¹ See H. Leclercq in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, Vol. XIV (1939), col. 976-80.

² *Patrologia Orientalis*, Vol. XVII, pp. 708-10.

of the Transfiguration on 13th Nahase. According to Matthew and Mark the Confession at Caesarea Philippi took place six days before Christ went up into a mountain with Peter, James and John, and was transfigured before them.

The gospel for 22nd February, which has always been the lection from Matthew about the Confession at Caesarea Philippi used on all days dedicated to Peter, is sometimes, if Easter falls early, read six days before the Transfiguration gospel appointed both for the Saturday of the Lenten ember days and for the Sunday following. But it does not seem likely that this was ever anything more than a coincidence. No sufficient explanation has in any case been provided for the choice of 22nd February as a suitable date for remembering the Primacy of Peter.

There is another occasion in the liturgical year when the lection of Caesarea Philippi precedes by the appropriate interval that of the Transfiguration. This occurs, as in the Coptic Church, in August: the dedication of St Peter ad Vincula on 1st August is six days (by the Roman reckoning, though five in modern counting) before the festival of the Transfiguration on the 6th. The Coptic commemoration of the Primacy of Peter thus falls on the eve of St Peter ad Vincula, which of course has since the fifth century been the dedication festival of the church of that name in Rome, and is not specially concerned with Peter's primacy. Moreover, the number of days lying between this dedication festival and the Transfiguration must be fortuitous, for the former began to be celebrated long before the Transfiguration, which was later introduced from the East where it was kept on 6th August, another unexplained date.

This inconclusive note may perhaps suitably end with another coincidence: in the last century a sarcophagus was unearthed in the church of St Peter ad Vincula, which claimed to contain the bones of the Maccabees, the seven Jewish brothers whose martyrdom for their faith at Antioch is also celebrated on 1st August. The relics were transferred to this church in the fifth century, and the sarcophagus, which dates from the fourth century, bears reliefs of five Biblical scenes, the last of which is the handing over of the keys to Peter.

E. BICKERSTETH.

NEWS AND COMMENT

OWING to the need to produce the present issue of *E.C.Q.* within the shortest possible time, and the length of the period which has unfortunately elapsed since the last issue went to press in the middle of 1959, no attempt can here be made to provide a complete chronicle of the ecumenical events of the last eighteen months. In future issues, however, special attention will be given to this section, which we feel can be one of the most useful parts of the review, and for which we particularly ask the co-operation of our readers and correspondents throughout the world.

There is one event, however, which cannot be passed over in silence, since it has been widely recognized both by Catholic and non-Catholic students of ecumenical affairs as being of far-reaching significance for the unity of Christendom, comparable to that of the calling of the Ecumenical Council itself.

This event is the announcement, in a *motu proprio* of His Holiness Pope John XXIII, published on Whit-Sunday 1960 and concerned with the various preparatory Commissions for the Council, of the setting up of a special Secretariat with responsibility for all matters connected with the unity of the Church. It is generally expected that this Secretariat, whose President is H.E. Cardinal Augustine Bea with the well-known Dutch ecumenist Mgr J. F. M. Willebrands as its Secretary, will survive the Council and become a permanent institution. We give here a translation of the relevant section of the *motu proprio*, the wording of which is significant :

"Then, as a token of our affection and goodwill towards those who bear the name of Christians but are separated from this Apostolic See, to enable them to follow the work of the council and to find more easily the path by which they may arrive at that unity for which "Jesus Christ prayed so ardently to His heavenly Father", we are establishing a special "advisory board" or secretariat, presided over by a Cardinal whom we shall choose, and organized in the same manner as the commissions."¹

¹ We have taken the translation published in the *Tablet* of 18th June 1960. It will be noticed with what delicacy the Pope respects the consciences of those who, in the present situation, cannot envisage unity in terms of a 'return' to the Catholic Church; while at the same time making it clear that the Church's *dogmatic* position remains, as it always must, unaltered.

Cardinal Bea himself has made it clear that the object of the Secretariat is not merely to be that of conveying information about the Council and about the Catholic Church in general to the different non-Catholic Christian communities, but also and above all to seek the means of establishing a genuine dialogue in order to prepare the way for unity, which it is realized must still be a long way off.

The *Osservatore Romano*² quotes a statement of H.E. Cardinal Lercaro, Archbishop of Bologna, to an assembly held recently in Italy in connection with the Council. The Cardinal stated that in keeping with the thinking of Augustine Cardinal Bea on the question, the Council will seek 'to establish and encourage the most favourable conditions for the mutual comprehension and sympathy which already exists and for a still greater reconciliation between the Catholic Church and the separated brethren, which could lead to union'.

'Certainly', he said, 'the Catholic Church will not be able to make compromises about dogma; but for everything else, such as rites and discipline, she could and would want to take account of the traditions and wishes of the churches desirous of unity, in particular those churches forming the World Council of Churches.'

A fuller consideration of the Council and its purpose in relation to Christian Unity, will appear in the next number of *E.C.Q.*

² See Ecumenical Press Service, 30th September 1960, p. 33.

OBITUARY

As a result of the interruption in publication of the *E.C.Q.* due to the disappearance of our own so much regretted Dom Bede Winslow, this is the first number of the review to appear since the death, a few months only after that of Dom Bede, of the great Founder of the monastery of Amay-Chevetogne and of its review *Irénikon*. Even at this late date, it would be unthinkable for *E.C.Q.* to refrain from associating itself with the sorrow of the Community of Chevetogne on the occasion of their loss, and at the same time with their thanksgiving for such a life as that of Dom Lambert Beauduin.

The monastery has now published a small commemorative volume, and in connection with this we shall return in a future number of *E.C.Q.* to review at greater length than is now possible the life and achievement of this great servant of Christianity Unity. In the meantime, we cannot do better than recall the statement of our distinguished contemporary, the Roman review *Unitas*¹:

'Dom Lambert Beauduin, well known in both Catholic and non-Catholic ecumenical circles for his long association with the Benedictine priories of Amay and Chevetogne in Belgium and with the ecumenical quarterly *Irénikon*, died on 11th January at the age of 86.

In answer to the appeal made by Pope Pius XI to the Primate of the Benedictine Order, Dom Beauduin founded a small monastery at Amay in 1925 dedicated particularly to Russian Byzantine studies and intended to serve as a foyer for matters dealing with reunion and with the Christian East. It was at this monastery the following year that Dom Beauduin and his confrères launched the periodical *Irénikon*. "This new review", he wrote at the time, "brings with it a message of peace. It wishes to be the organ of a great movement for the union of the Churches."

The community of Amay was later to transfer its headquarters to Chevetogne and from there has continued its work for the cause of Christian unity. To-day the priory is one of the leading Catholic centres in the ecumenical field and has been visited by many Orthodox, Anglicans, and Protestants over the years. This has been in accordance with Dom

¹ English language edition, Spring 1960, p. 63.

Beauduin's original intention, for he considered that true unitive activity consisted in establishing contacts between Catholics and their separated brethren by every means possible, particularly by a psychological *rapprochement*.

Perhaps the key to Dom Beauduin's ecumenical apostolate can be found in the following passage which he wrote some years ago : '... to create, above all, an atmosphere favourable to mutual understanding and respect ; to dedicate oneself to a work of adaptation in all the domains of religious thought and practice ; to disengage the essentials of Christianity from the legitimate ethnical and historical forms with which it has been clothed over the course of the centuries in order to safeguard all its original expansion and to render it capable of assimilation by all cultures and all civilizations, for the Church of Christ is neither Latin, nor Greek, nor Slav, but is Catholic ... ; in brief, to give oneself over in patience, in charity, and humility to a work on the psychological level, a work destined to dissipate prejudices and to open up for the East and West the bright vistas of confidence and of love".'

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The Council of Florence by Joseph Gill, s.j. (Cambridge University Press, 1959) 47s. 6d.

Theologians and historians for many years to come will be indebted to Father Gill's masterly study of the Council of Florence. This is a very substantial and well documented book, and it has the additional merit of being unusually readable, thus inviting the attention of many who are often deterred from approaching a subject of such complexity by their own lack of specialized knowledge. Father Gill's researches so far published, into the background and documents connected with the Council of Florence, will already be well known to scholars. The present book, which is in the main a historical portrait of the Council, forms a happy blending of the exacting rigour of scholarship with a sympathetic and understanding charity for the people and circumstances concerned.

Whether or not the motives of those who shaped the policies in past centuries were predominantly opportunistic, the kind of evidence which can survive in history and the exigencies of the historian's technique inevitably connive to produce a *prima facie* impression to this effect. It is difficult to judge motives in retrospect without giving undue weight to the political circumstances we know or believe to have existed at the time. Nor can we put uncritical reliance on the writings of those who report the events of their own lifetime. Unfortunately the discontented and divisive elements in any generation are also those who turn most readily to the pen, and even a cursory glance at to-day's world press will show how misleading contemporary records can be. It is greatly to Father Gill's credit as a scholar that he has succeeded in disentangling the complex circumstances which surround the Council of Florence and has thereby been able to present his thesis in terms of the essential integrity of the principal participants on both the Latin and Greek sides.

The disparity between the hopes and resolve which led up to the Decree of Union signed in Florence on 5th July 1439 by the Greeks and Latins, and the subsequent fate of the union, must be judged in the context of circumstances very largely outside the control of the participants. Pope Eugenius IV,

for all his desire for union with the Greeks and other Eastern Christians, was handicapped by dissensions in the Latin Church and the warring factions among the European Princes, which also added greatly to his difficulty in raising the money for the Council's expenses and for the promised support for Constantinople against the Turks. The earlier Crusades had left an ugly legacy of mistrust and hostility at least among the rank and file of the Eastern Christians, which would be an insecure foundation for any union. The death of Patriarch Joseph II in Florence deprived the Greeks of a leader who was so necessary if the Union was to be commended to those at home. The death of the wife of the Emperor John VIII, and his own political problems on his return to Constantinople helped to divert his energies from implementing the Union more fully. Perhaps the most serious event was the defeat at Varna in 1444 of the Papal forces sent in defence of Constantinople against the Turks, and finally the fall of Constantinople in 1453 cut short any hope of reviving support for the Union.

These and other misfortunes would have been a severe test in any circumstances. But the Council had to contend also with difficulties which to-day would surely have deterred such a venture from the outset. Yet in the end, in addition to the theological problems which had to be overcome and political obstacles surmounted, poverty, plague and perils at sea and on land were outwitted by the perseverance and patience of those who laboured, first with Pope Martin V to bring East and West together, and then with Pope Eugenius to achieve the union. Theological discussion was severely handicapped by lack of knowledge about the West among the Eastern representatives. This was due in part to the scarcity of books and ignorance of the Latin language, but its seriousness was enormously increased by the persistent fear which haunted the Greeks that the texts quoted by the Latins were not authentic—and the Greeks had little means of verifying them.

The debates on the theological issues show that the main opposition to the union came not from the Greek scholars but from the lower clergy and monks. With the exception of Metropolitan Mark of Ephesus who never wavered in his opposition, the Greek bishops on the whole were open to

persuasion and in some cases even keen supporters of the union. Metropolitan Bessarion of Nicaea and Metropolitan Isidore of Kiev and All Russia, came out strongly in favour of the union, and after the Council Isidore especially worked energetically to commend it to the Russians as well as to the Greeks.

Theological agreement when it was finally reached did not cover a wide enough basis to give real security against future qualms and difficulties. The Greeks appear to have exhausted themselves in the battle over the *Filioque*. Their terms of reference in any case seem to have been confined to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and they were unwilling to be drawn very far on other matters such as Purgatory, and the primacy of the Pope, though substantial agreement was reached in regard to the *Epiklesis* in discussions on the Eucharist. Questions likely to arise from or to cause administrative difficulties, such as that of divorce, or the precise interpretation and scope of the Pope's jurisdiction, were however shelved.

From a unionist standpoint this was probably providential. It would be too much to expect humanly that further agreement could be established after the weary months already spent in debate: the Greek contingent was away from Constantinople for nearly two years as it was. Moreover the time was not ripe on the Greek side for a detailed discussion of questions in which their theologians were not equipped to engage, and in any event it is very unlikely that they could have carried the rank and file of their people with them any further than they did.

Florence remains in spite of, perhaps because of, its limited objective, an important landmark in the restoration of communion between Rome and the East. Whether or not the method of a General Council will be deemed appropriate for future efforts towards unity, the union achieved there established a basis for the next step, and has already provided it for the union with the Ruthenians in 1596 and the Rumanians in 1700. It will be unnecessary, one hopes, to re-hash the long drawn out *Filioque* controversy. Moreover, since the Vatican Council it is now inevitable that the real source of contention between East and West—the question of the universal jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome—will have to be

faced at the outset. No union between the Eastern Orthodox Churches and Rome will be possible until this is settled, and once it is settled the other theological issues will fall into their proper perspective.

It is frequently said by those Orthodox who are apprehensive about union with Rome that the promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the Vatican Council's definition regarding Papal Infallibility have added fresh obstacles to the achievement of union. But this surely is a timid view and does scant justice to the zeal for theological truth which has characterized the East at its best. On the contrary, since such definitions are explicit clarifications of the teaching of the Catholic Church, one can also regard them as clearing the ground for future discussion when the time comes.

The West is certainly much better prepared to meet the East now than was the case in Florence. There is much more understanding of the traditions and local customs held dear by the Orthodox, and for this the Council of Florence is indirectly as well as directly responsible. Catholics of Eastern rite are now accepted as a normal manifestation of the life of the Church. Eastern liturgies and spirituality and their historical setting have received the sympathetic attention of many eminent Western scholars. The fear that 'union' is equivalent to 'Latinization' has largely been dispelled by the personal initiatives of the recent Popes.

On the Orthodox side the theological picture has undergone less change. Comparatively few scholars are well informed about the West, and most of these are laymen or married clerics. Among the bishops, though there are some who would give high priority to the question of union with Rome on the grounds that Christian unity is manifestly God's will for the Church, the majority are cautious and conservative when it comes to the point of practical ways and means and there are some who even seem to be opposed to the idea of a *rapprochement*. Resistance comes mainly, as before, from the monks and lower clergy who for centuries have formed the hard core of Orthodox resistance to Moslem and other alien influence, and who in regarding themselves sincerely—if also at times fanatically—as the guardians of Orthodoxy, interpret this to mean holding inflexibly to familiar historical forms and practices.

The Old Believer schism in Russia, and the more recent small Old Calenderist breakaway in Greece, are symptoms of this tendency to equate Orthodoxy with rigid adherence to the letter of tradition and more particularly to the minutiae of time-hallowed customs. Only a deepening of scholarship and the freedom of greater confidence which a wider fellowship of learning can bring, is likely to dispel these barriers of fear and prejudice.

The success achieved in Florence can be attributed in some measure to the Latins' appreciation of the fact that the Greeks took their stand on the writings of the Eastern saints, and thus the Latins set out to show that there was no conflict between the Eastern saints and their own. It is interesting that the Greeks never seriously challenged the authority of the Latin saints, and though some dissenters would have wished to label the Latin Fathers as heretics as well as schismatics, these were nevertheless accepted as authoritative spokesmen for the Latins. It is characteristic that the argument used by Bessarion—that the Latin saints who taught the *Filioque* could not be heretics since it was the same Spirit who spoke in all the saints as witness the harmony of their writings—finally prevailed with the Orthodox. 'Till now' the Greeks declared after months of lengthy debate, 'we never knew the Latin saints nor read them: now however, we have come to know them, have read them and approve them' (p. 256).

However necessary it is to convince bishops and theologians, the Council of Florence has shown clearly that the ultimate problem for union is how to carry the mass of the faithful over to the new loyalties. For Catholics the voice of the Popes and Councils since Florence as well as before are of course authoritative. But for those who do not yet accept this authority, the writings of individual saints and doctors of the Church are more compelling. The Orthodox in particular are very open to listening to such witnesses. It is to be hoped that among other valuable contributions which Father Gill's book may bring, it will encourage the Eastern Christians to study the writings of Western saints more earnestly, and also stimulate the production of translations of these writings in the vernacular of Orthodox countries. Familiarity with Western spirituality and a love and understanding of the many saints of the Latin Church who have been sanctified

within her fold, will be a surer foundation for a secure union than decisions—essential as these are—as to the dogmatic significance of points of grammar in conciliar pronouncements. Union will only be stable when the people feel at home and among friends and can recognize that the new relationship has brought them deeper into the family of God's children.

HELLE GEORGIADIS.

Sources of Christian Theology, Volume II: Sacraments and Forgiveness, History and Doctrinal Development of Penance, Extreme Unction and Indulgences by Paul F. Palmer, s.j. Pp. 410 (The Newman Press ; Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1960) 50s. net.

'This is the second in a series of volumes designed to present in English translation, and in topical arrangement, the basic texts and documents which have shaped and continue to control Catholic teaching.' This statement of Father Palmer's Preface describes clearly enough the task which the author has set himself, and he certainly deserves the gratitude of seminarians, who will find his book—if rather expensive for their means—a most helpful companion to their studies. The time has passed in which theology could be studied by means of manuals which, after a few hasty quotations from Scripture and Tradition, were for the rest filled with the arguments of post-tridentine theologians. The sacrament of reconciliation offers a splendid example of this, precisely because it has known such a spectacular development through the ages ; as Karl Rahner has remarked, it was not St Joseph who was the carpenter who made the first confessional. To trace this development we need texts, and Father Palmer has provided us with a selection which is as good as one could wish for, in a translation which reads easily.

The short introductions to the most important texts combine brevity with clarity, and witness to the competence of the author, who is a specialist in this field. The book will perhaps prove most useful where it gives the early medieval texts on penitential discipline, and also where it deals with indulgences, the theology of which is so notoriously neglected in our manuals.

One thing seems regrettable in the author's selection : he justifies the inclusion of texts of Moghila by saying that it is

impossible to find authorized statements of the Orthodox Church. This is of course perfectly true, but it does not mean that Moghila is in any way representative of the Orthodox tradition, and indeed it would be hard to find a single Orthodox theologian who would not maintain the opposite.

The book is very well produced and does credit to its publishers.

Tertullian—Treatises on Penance. On Penance and Purity. Translated and annotated by William P. Le Saint, s.j., S.T.D. Ancient Christian Writers No. 28. Pp. 330 (Longmans, Green & Co., London 1959) 30s. bound.

It seems hardly necessary to review a book of this sort. The quality of the collection is well known, and any new volume is eagerly to be welcomed. Father Le Saint gives us here not only a very readable translation of Tertullian's treatises on Penance, which have played such a crucial rôle in the shaping of our theology on the subject, but also some excellent introductions. His most important contribution is in the notes and indexes, which fill nearly 200 out of 330 pages and which contain a wealth of profound scholarship, clearly the fruit of long and painstaking research. The author deserves our gratitude for a fine piece of work, which has been splendidly produced by the publishers.

G.V.D.K.

Father Kuriackos Elias Chavara, Servant of God by K. C. Chacko, M.A., B.E., M.S., A.M.I.E.(Ind.), A.M.Am.S.C.E. Published by the Postulator, Cause of Fr Kuriackos Elias, St Joseph's Monastery, Mannanam, Kerala State, 1959.

This is an attractively-written account, if somewhat hagiographical in tone, of the life and achievements of a priest of the Syrian Malabar rite, born in 1805, who was the founder of the first indigenous Indian religious community for men (now known as the Third Order of Discalced Syrian Carmelites), and of numerous communities of women religious, as also of many apostolic and charitable works of various kinds. We certainly share the author's prayer that Father Kuriackos, whose diocesan process of beatification was authorized in 1955, may be canonized.

There is abundant incidental evidence throughout the book of the extreme latinization which this Church has undergone since it came under the jurisdiction of Portuguese Latin bishops in the sixteenth century. In this historical situation it was perhaps inevitable that the great revival and development which has taken place there during the last 100 years should have been realized in terms of disciplines, devotions and practices of Latin origin, taken over as a matter of course. It is a pity, however, that the author does not seem more aware of the importance of this issue. He admits, but passes over without comment, the fact that the dramatic Rocos schism of 1861 was due to the widespread local resentment at Latin jurisdiction and other encroachments, and to the failure of the Portuguese and Roman authorities to provide for the appointment of Syrian bishops in Malabar. But the account here given of this significant event is confused and superficial, and touches really only on Father Kuriackos' efforts to maintain and restore unity.

Anchored in God by Constantine Cavarnos ('Astir 'Publishing Company, Athens, 1959).

The author, a Greek-American born in Boston and now engaged in research at the University of Athens, gives here an account of three visits made to Mount Athos in 1952, 1954 and 1958, and of his conversations held there with some of the monks. 'What precisely are the aims of Athonite monasticism, and what are the means that are employed by the monks of Athos for achieving them? What is the relationship of these ends and means to the teaching of Christ, St Paul, and the Eastern Christian Fathers? How are the monasteries and smaller monastic establishments on the Holy Mountain organized? What is the nature and extent of private prayer and common worship? What, besides these, constitutes the monks' daily round of activities? Is the ancient tradition of Eastern Orthodox mysticism, known as *hesychasm*, still alive on Athos? What books do the monks especially study and recommend? What are their views on monasticism, contemporary mankind, philosophy, solitude, hardship, fasting, prayer, etc.? What is the exact character of the architecture, painting and music on Athos, and what part do these arts

play in the life of the monks ? These are some of the questions to which he was seeking an answer. The result, admirably illustrated with numerous photographs and some charming designs and drawings by Messrs Fotis Kontoglous and Rallis Kopsidis, is quite the most attractive and serious work on the subject which we have yet seen in a small compass. The book would be most suitable as a gift.

C.J.L.N.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Editions du Cerf, Collection 'Sources Chrétiennes' :

No. 58—Denys l'Aréopagite : *La Hiérarchie Céleste*, René Roques, Günter Heil and Maurice de Gandillac.

No. 62—Iréne de Lyon : *Démonstration de la Prédication Apostolique*, L. M. Froidevaux.

No. 63—Richard de Saint-Victor : *La Trinité*, Gaston Salet, s.j.

No. 64—Jean Cassien : *Conférences XVIII-XXIV*, Dom E. Pichery.

No. 65—Gérase Ier : *Lettre contre les Lupercales, et Dix-huit Messes du Sacrementaire Léonien*, G. Ponarès.

Burns Oates : *Holy Writ or Holy Church*, George H. Tavard.

Hollis and Carter : *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics*, Jean Doresse.

Desclée de Brouwer : *Histoire du Mouvement Bulgare vers l'Eglise Catholique au XIXe siècle*, Ivan Sofranov.

Sheed and Ward : *The Resurrection*, F. X. Durrwell, C.S.S.R.

Liturgy and Doctrine, Charles Davis. *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, John Henry Newman.

Darton, Longman and Todd : *Approaches to Christian Unity*, C. J. Dumont, o.p. *The Churches and the Church*, Bernard Leeming, s.j.

Harvard University Press : *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West*, Deno John Geanakoplos.

Fordham University Press : *After Nine Hundred Years*, Yves Congar, o.p.

Augustinus Verlag, Würzburg : *Katholizität und Sobornost'*, Bernhard Plank, O.E.S.A.

St Leo Shop, Inc., Newport, R.I. : *A List of Books in English about the Eastern Churches*, Donald Attwater.

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